Prof Surjit Singh

He is a retired Theoretical Physicist. He has been watching Hindi movies since 1952, has been collecting Hindi songs, movies and magazines since 1969, and has been writing about these things since 1996.

He has had a website since 1999,

http://hindi-movies-songs.com/joomla/

rec.music.indian.misc

RMIM Articles:

1. Singers

Prof Surjit Singh

RMIM Articles:
1. Singers

Compiler

Professor Surjit Singh

Copyright © 2023 Prof Surjit Singh

All rights reserved.

Photo Credits: From the authors' collection, unless otherwise stated

Disclaimer: The original copyright of the articles and the posts rests with the original authors/compilers.

Cover Design: By the author based on original work by Libby Taggart Singh

By professor toofaanii publishers, East Lansing, MI USA

DEDICATION

Friends [including from (but not limited to) both the classic RMIM and the new RMIM) who encouraged me to keep up my craziness for films, specially Hindi films of the 30s and 40s

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Immense debt is owed to the pioneers, the regulars, the lurkers, the posters, the warriors, the fanatics, the contributors of articles, photos, videos, and songs, the maintainers, the moderators, the meet holders, the meet attenders, the commemorative preparers, the quizzers, the photographers, the videographers, the airport drivers, the behind-the-sceners, the software writers, and other forgotten RMIMers.

A big thanks to my wife Harmesh, and three children, Jai, Libby, and Raja, and, special huggable thanks to Benjamin, for always being there for me.

Professor Surjit Singh

East Lansing, MI

February 2024

CONTENTS

PREFACE	9
Master Madan - biography	10
Master Madan - recordings	12
MUKESH: Naushad's Jaimala	13
Who made Mukesh?	15
Mukesh: Remembering papa	19
Mohd. Rafi obit.	22
YAAD-e-RAFI: Naushad's Jaimala	23
Rafiana.	27
Padmashree Mohammed Rafi	30
The Immortal Rafi	32
First recorded songs of Rafi	34
Mohd. Rafi - A Tribute	40
Rafi - The Immortal!	42
Shahid Rafi on Rafi	44
Prabodhchandra alias 'Manna' Dey	46
Manna Dey	48
Manna Magic	50
RMIM's Manna Dey interview	52
Manna Dey	55
Talat Mahmood -Velvet Voice	57
Talat Mahmood - voice from the past	59
Talat: melody your name	61
Talat - Singer with a golden voice	63
Naushad on Talat	66

Kishore Kumar an interview with Pritish Nandy 68

Kishore Kumar 76

Kishore Kumar - A Tribute 79

Kishore Kumar - In his Own Words - Some Interviews. 81

Kishore Kumar sings for C. Ramchandra 84

Kishore Kumar Ganguly 86

Kishore lives on 88

Kishore Kumar - Eccentric genius 90

Asha Bhosle 92

Asha: A VOICE FOR ALL SEASONS 94

Asha's Filmfare Interview. (excerpts) 97

Asha Bhosle 106

Asha Bhosle and Male co-singers 109

Asha Bhosle and Music Directors 113

Asha Bhosle and Female Co-singers 120

Number of songs by Asha 123

Lata, Asha and Madan Mohan - statistics 124

Kundan Lal Saigal 126

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 1 128

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 2 131

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 3 134

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 4 138

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 5 143

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 6 147

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 7 156

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 8 163

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 9 165

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara Appendix 166

If its 7:56 it must be Saigal 173

K. L. Saigal: "Fifty Years Later, Saigal Lives On" 176

Meet Lata Mangeshkar - an Interview 179

Lata and Guiness Record? 182

Lata - How many and with whom? 186

Lata Mangeshkar and all Music Directors - Statistics 188

Lata & 239 lyricists of Hindi movie songs 193

Lata & 93 male singers of Hindi movie songs 199

Lata & 57 female singers of Hindi movie songs 202

Lata Mangeshkar - Singer of Saint? 204

Lata's Best - Quiz Introduction, Questions 206

Lata & Noorjehan - Parallel Lines Meet Part 1 - The Early Years 230

Lata & Noorjehan - Parallel Lines Meet Part 2 - The Grand Migration 234

Lata & Noorjehan - Parallel Lines Meet Part 3 - Mehboob and Beyond 239

Lata & Noorjehan - Parallel Lines Meet Part 4 - The last 40 years 246

The Malika turns 73 - Noorjehan 251

Remembering Vocalist Shamshad Begum 252

Suraiya - A Voice from the Past 254

Suraiya - for the sake of love 256

Mubarak Begum: A Forgotten Voice 258

Geeta Dutt 261

Rajkumari - Songs sung true 266

Suman Kalyanpur 270

S.P.B. - At the pinnacle of success 276

SPB and National Award 279

No Parallel for SPB 281

Yesudas 283

Kavita Krishnamurthi 284

Kumar Sanu 286

Hema Sardesai 287

Hema Sardesai - Sapnay come true 290

Abhijeet - Against All Odds 292

Smooth switchover from one style to another - Hariharan 294

Composers' Wives and Singing 296

ABOUT THE AUTHOR 298

OTHER BOOKS BY THE PUBLISHER 299

PREFACE

In the early days of the Internet, I used to read news and other stuff about India on the Yahoo portal and its directories. One day, one of my Indian students told me about Mailing Lists. So, I started reading some of those, e.g. soc.culture.indian. From there I discovered rec.music.indian.misc, which I learnt how to read on Deja News.

This was early 1995 and I was teaching at the Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX. I read the FAQ, the articles, and lurked for a while. I noticed that apart from the lyrics, the most common questions appeared to be about the movie cast, and the list of songs. So, my early posts were on helping people using the now legendary and pioneering Hindi Film Geet Kosh (HFGK) by Har Mandir Singh "Hamraaz". I also helped with the identification of lesser known characters in the movies, specially some of whom had famous songs picturized on them.

I learned a lot from some very knowledgeable RMIMers, e.g. Vish Krishnan, Rajan Parrikar, guri, Ashok Dhareshwar, Chetan Vinchhi, and the late Satish Kalra, to name a few. I and Harmesh enjoyed participating in the quizzes. From 1995 to now (2017) a good part of my waking hours have been spent on the Web, and a big chunk of that has been devoted to interacting with fellow RMIMers.

A few years ago, Suresh Chandvankar, the Honorary Secretary of the Society of Indian Record Collectors, asked me to contribute an article on RMIM for the Society's magazine, The Record News. I started to write slowly and carefully taking my own time, but soon realized that there was no way to write briefly about RMIM. So I asked him if he could devote a whole issue of the magazine to RMIM! He said that magazine was no longer being published, but why don't I write a book on RMIM. It was an excellent suggestion, because so much original valuable content has been generated by RMIMers that it should be collected before it disappears. So on the Facebook RMIM group, I started to collect pdf files of various posted articles. It is a work in progress and is continuing.

In the meantime, January 1, 2017 was the 25th anniversary of RMIM. I thought about writing a mini version of the book to go with the Silver Jubilee meet being planned for Bangalore, India. But there was not enough time and I was discouraged. Then, Pavan Jha asked if I was going to attend and Anup Pandey mused that it would be great if I could release the book during the meet. That was enough incentive to get to work. There was no way to include everything, so I had to select. Result is in your hands. The big book is called Omnibus, I decided to call this version the Minibus :)

I decided to keep the book a surprise. I had to have an accomplice from Bangalore to distribute the book at the meet. I chose Chetan Vinchhi, he agreed readily. But when I finished the ms on April 2 and asked my US and Indian printers if they could print and deliver 50 copies to Bangalore by the 7th evening, they said no way. Again Chetan came to the rescue, and he, along with Ashok Dhareshwar, was able to keep the secret and deliver the book on time. Amazing people we have in RMIM!

In preparation for the big Omnibus, I looked at the material. It turns out that we have generated thousands of relevant posts, hundreds of articles, thousand of song lyrics, hundreds of quizzes like Rim Jhim Geeton Ki, Chitrahar, etc, and dozens of individual series like A Sher A Day, Abhi To Main Jawan Hoon, Fill in the Blanks, to name a few. All this would have come to thousands of pages. What I plan to do is a series of books on different topics, about 200-300 pages each. I will make the pdfs available for free to download and also have the paperbacks to buy on Amazon and Pothi.

I am starting with the Articles, there will be 3-4 books on Articles, the first one is on Singers.

RMIM Archive Article "354".

Master Madan - biography

Posted by: Surjit Singh

Author: Surjit Singh

Master Madan: a short biography of a short life

I have been meaning to write about Master Madan for some time. A recent query gives me an excuse to do so now. Of the eight songs he recorded in his short life, only two Gazals are available now. These are the famous,"yuu.N naa rah rah ke hame.m ta.Dapaaiiye" and, "hairat se tak rahaa hai". These were written by saaGar nizaami and set to music by amaranaath, elder brother of the duo husnlal-bhagatram. Hiiraalaal was on tabalaa and on violin was MM's elder brother Master Mohan. During 1966-69, these were played again and again in the common room of Bhatanagar Hall of Panjab University, where I was a student at that time. Here is a summary of his life, extracted from an article in issue 52 of Listeners' Bulletin, a magazine published by that sardar-e-azam, Har Mandir Singh. The article is based on his interview with Master Madan's elder sister, Mrs. Shanti Devi, during 1983.

MM was born on December 28, 1927, in khaanakhaanaa, a village in District jalandhar of the Panjab. He sang in public for the first time when he was 3.5 years old, in a rally arranged by dharamapur sanatorium. He sang, "vandan he shaaradaa naman karuu.N" in raag mishrit kaafii. The audience was in heaven and on their insistence, he sang two more raags. He was given many gold medals right there and then. After that he and his elder brother toured all over India and collected many prizes from the rulers of many princely states. They sang in the famous haravallabh music festival of jalandhar and later in shimalaa. Apparantely, in the shimalaa sammelan, diinaanath mangeshakar had also come but thousands were eager to listen to MM.

MM was a very religious child and spoke little. During the night, he would just sit in padmaasan position and jap maalaa. He was educated at sanaatan dharam school in shimalaa, raamajas school in Delhi and Hindu College in Delhi. His musical education was provided by his mother, Mrs. puuran devii, his father amar singh, MD amaranaath, and, later by gusaaii.n bhagavat kishor, aasaf alii, zahiir haidar, saradaar husain, ramazaan Kaan, and taalib husain, all well-known music teachers of the day.

At the age of eight, he was a famous radio singer, singing mainly on Delhi radio station on aliipur road. MM was a disciple of sant kaleraa.n vaale, a famous guru in Panjab. Apparantely, the sant foretold of MM's untimely death at a young age. In one of the gatherings of the sant, MM sang raag jaunapurii with such great concentration that people claimed to see the raaginii herself dressed in beautiful garb. When he sang bhairavii though, jaunpurii disappeared. This incident was duly reported by the press.

His final public program took place in Calcutta (have they changed it's name yet?) at age 14. He sang, "vinatii suno morii avadhapur ke basaiyaa" for 1.5 hours with such beauty that the public refused to go home and accompanied him to the guest house. One patron respectfully offered Rs. 500, a princely sum in those days, on his feet. Also 9 gold medals were announced by various patrons to be given to him. In those days, gold medals were really made of gold. Much later, during 1964-1968 when I received my "gold" medals from Panjab University for standing first in a multitude of exams, I was disappointed to find out that the "gold" medals were really not even made of silver, but had an atomic layer of Ag on the outside!

He returned to Delhi, where his brother-in-law indar singh took him to the radio station on his bike, where MM sat in the front Tokarii. He started to get high fever, which refused to go away. MM kept going to the

Delhi radio station for about 3-4 months. Many remedies were tried but nothing helped. In the summer of '42, he went to shimalaa, where his forehead, and joints started to shine unusually. He died on June 5, 1942 suffering a great deal of pain. It is suspected that he died of mercury poisoning. He used to go to Delhi radio station canteen to drink milk. It is believed that a jealous singer gave him Hg in his milk.

On his death, shimalaa closed down and a huge gathering accompanied him on his last journey.

A filmvaalaa wanted to cast him as sant kabiir in a movie. Regrettably, his parents refused to give permission, a decision they regretted later.

sangam kalaa group holds an annual all-india program in MM's memory in which thousands of talented children participate. Apparantely, a group in Canada also holds functions in his memory. Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fan(atic), period.

RMIM Archive Article "355".

Master Madan - recordings

Posted by: Surjit Singh

Author: Surjit Singh

Here is a complete listing of the recordings of Master Madan known to the world-famous compiler Har Mandir Singh:

1. yuu.N naa rah rah kar a Gazal
2. hairat se tak rahaa a Gazal
3. jis raaz ko duniyaa a Gazal
4. aane lagaa hai koii a Gazal
5. gori gori bai.yaa.N raag lachchaa saakh
6. morii binatii maano raag khamaaj
7. man kii baat man hii raag soraTh
8. chetanaa hai to chet le raag tilang
9. baagaan vich piingaan panjaabii giit
10. raavii de parale ka.nDe panjaabii giit

For more information, please see

http://hindi-films-songs.com/mastermadan.html

RMIM Archive Article "2".

MUKESH: Naushad's Jaimala

Posted by: sm0e@ns2.CC.Lehigh.EDU (SAMIUDDIN MOHAMMED) Source: Jaimala - a popular Vividh Bharati program. A special Jaimala presented by Naushad in memory of Mukesh. RMIM ke bhaio aur baheno! I am posting the typewritten version of a special Jaimala program presented by the Shehanshah-e-Mausiqui, Naushad Sahab, in the memory of Mukesh. [Jaimala was a popular Vividh Bharati program for "Fauji Bhai"s and the Vishesh Jaimala used to be presented by a famous (usually film) personality.] Here's the special Jaimala program which I have translated into English from the original Urdu version. The beauty of Naushad's refined Urdu is certainly lost in the translation, but I hope u will enjoy reading what Naushad has to say not only about Mukesh, but also regarding different music directors as well. Sentences which cud not be translated properly have been left in the origi- nal language. DISCLAIMER: All opinions expressed below are Naushad's and not mine; esp. the ones regarding Shanky-J :-) Songs played in the program are included within "[....]. My com- ments are in "{...}" Sami Mohammed (A Naushad fan) ----

Mukesh: A Singer and a Gentleman Is karyakram ke praayojak hain, HMT ghaRiyaan aur HMT tractor! :-) Aaj ka vishesh Jaimala karyakram, suprasidh gaayak swargiya Mukesh ki smruti me pesh kar rahen hain, film jagat ke mashoor sangeetkar, NAUSHAD. Maadar-e-watan ki sarhadon ke nigehbaan, bahadur fauji bhaion ko Naushad ka salaam! Aaj ki jaimala ke saare phool, mashoor gayak aur bemisaal insaan Mukesh ke geeton se goondi gaee hai:

[Dharti ko aakaash pukare,aaja aaja prem dwaare, aana hi hoga

Is duniya ko chhoRke pyaar,jhoote bandhan toRke saare jaana hi hoga] Mukesh was a native of Delhi and the whole city had been imbibed by his character. He had a heart as open as the Red Fort, a towering personality like the Qutub Minar, and a nature as gentle and soft as the waters of Jamuna. My first association with Mukesh was in Mehboob Sahab's film Andaaz in which he sang some songs in his beautiful voice. After that our friedship developed to such an extent that it has left a permanent mark in my heart. During the 20-25 years of our association, we at times worked to- gether and there were times when we couldn't. But, our friendship and mutual respect remained in tact. Whenever I met him, I used to feel as if I were meeting a true friend. He had a unique voice. Usme ek ajeeb quism ka dard aur soz tha. Perhaps this is the reason why most of his very popular songs are sad numbers. The first song which I'm going to play t'day was composed by the senior and highly-respected music director, Anil Biswas. Anil Da has shown us music directors new avenues, and this was the song with which Mukesh made his debut in Hindi films:

[Dil jalta hai to jalne de, aansu na baha faryaad na kar] Roshan Sahab was among the few highly knowledgeable and talented music directors of the film industry. His contributions to Hin- dustani sangeet are admirable. The following song is based on folk music, and Roshan Sahab has provided his magical touch to it:

[Oho re taal mile nadi ke jal me, nadi mile saagar me

Saagar mile kaunse jal me, koi jaane na] The talented team of Kalyanji-Anandji used to make everyone laugh with it's wit and humour. Yet, this very team could also bring tears to the eyes of the listeners with some of its serious songs. The following song from the film "Dil bhi tera, hum bhi tere", written by the famous poet Shamim Jaipuri substantiates my claim:

[Mujhko is raat ki tanhaai me aawaaz na do] The names Shankar-Jaikishan and Mukesh sound synonymous. SJ have made the maximum utilization of Mukesh's voice in a beautiful manner. {God, I can't type this any

more :-) } SJ are the shining stars of the world of music. Mukesh has sung all kinds of songs under their supervision. The following song from Kanhaiyya is considered to be among the best Mukesh/SJ combos and was written by Shailendra, who is a well-respected lyricist: [Mujhe tumse kuch bhi na chaahie, mujhe mere haal pe chhoRdo] Whenever one speaks about S.D.Burman, the folk music of Bengal starts playing in the background. He himself was an accomplished singer of folk songs. He has time and again made excellent use of Hindustani Classical Sangeet in his compositions. The following song from Badini, which Mukesh has rendered in an excellent fashion reminds one of that same music.

[O jaanewaale ho sake to lauTke aana] {Ad of "Zaqmee Aurat"..Zamarrud aur doosre theateron me dekhie! :-) Yo, Hyderabadis, rem. Zamarrud Mahal on Abids ? } Music director Khaiyyam had his own unique style and pehchaan. Whenever he was given a chance, he carved a niche for himself. The list of Khaiyyam's melodious songs is a very long one. It is my sincere wish that he continues to serve the world of music for a long long time to come. Film Kabhi Kabhi ka ye gaana jise Mukesh Sahab ne gaaya tha, main samajhta hun, sangeet aur shaeri ka bahut haseen sangam hai. Sahir ki shaeri ko Khaiyyam ne apni mausiqui se aur bhi char chand laga die hain!

[Kabhi Kabhi mere dil me quayal aata hai] {Ad of "Muquabala"... Ashok me rozana 3 show :-) } Salil Chaudary is not only a senior music director, but also a well know scholar of the Bengali language. He has made a mark in Bengali folk music as well as in Hindi films. His music has al- ways been highly melodious, and I have chosen the following song from Madhumati, which Mukesh has sung so very well.

[Suhaana safar aur ye mausam hasin] Laxmikant-Pyarelal have made big strides in the film industry. I hope they will continue to succeed further in the music world. Here's a popular song from the movie Milan which was written by Anand Bakshi. The fact that almost all songs of Anand Bakshi are popular is indeed praiseworthy. {C'mon Naushad Sahab, u needn't praise everyone u mention on ur program!}

[Saawan ka mahina, pawan kare sor] I would now like to present the first song which Mukesh sang for me. This song was the beginning of our friendship which I still cherish in my heart. Mukesh always used to sing this song in his live performances. This song was written by my dear friend and a famous Urdu poet, Majrooh Sultanpuri for the film Andaaz:

[Tu kahe agar jeevan bhar, main geet sunaata jaaun] Hindustan ki tamaam zubaanon me ishq ki sabse zyaada ehmiyat hai. Aur ishq bhi woh jo bande ka bande se nahin, bande ka Bhagwan se, Khuda se hota hai. Sabse pyaara piya woh hai, jisse milkar banda gum ho jaata. Aur koi naam nahin reh jaata siwa Bhagwan ke, siwa Khuda ke. Usse milkar, aur geet gaate hue, sabhi is duniya se guzar jaate hain. Mukesh ka Saajan se milan ho chuka hai, lekin unka geet aaj bhi duniya ke mele me goonj raha hai. Ye is program ka aaqri geet bhi hai. Isse pehle ek sher aapki quidmat me pesh karoonga jo Mukesh ke lie quiraar-e-aqeedat me maine pesh kiya tha:

Mehfilon ke daamanaon se sahilon ke aaspaas

Ye sada goonjegi sadiyon tak dilon ke aaspaas!

[Gaaeja geet milan ke tu apni lagan ke sajan ghar jaana hai] --- Sami Mohammed

RMIM Archive Article "78".

Who made Mukesh?

Posted by: Satish Subramanian[1] (subraman@cs.umn.edu)

Author: Raju Bharatan

------- Was it not Shanker-Jaikishan who really made Mukesh? Did Kalyanji-Anandji not merely take up where SJ left off in his case? Were Laxmikant-Pyarelal not responsible for Mukesh's second coming with "Milan" - with "saawan ka mahina", "hum tum", "bol gori bol", "mubarak ho sub ko" and "ram kare aisa ho jaaye"? But even before SJ, KA and LP, was it not Roshan who got Mukesh to make a stunning impact with "Bawre Nain" heart-stopper, "teri duniya mein dil lagta nahin", also getting this soul-singer to render "oho re taal mile nadi ke jal main" (for "Anokhi Raat") just before his death? But, before Roshan there was Naushad. And, before Naushad, there was Anil Biswas. "Mukesh came to me," says Biswas, "wanting to be second Kundanlal Saigal. He had just heard Naushad record in the voice of Saigal, "jab dil hi toot gaya" for "Shahjahan". So I studiedly cast him in the mould of K.L. Saigal through "dil jalta hain to jalne de" in "Pehli Nazar". Having done that, and on "dil jalta hai" proving a hit, I told Mukesh that we had both proved our point that we could do a Saigal. Now we had, I told him, to prove that Mukesh was Mukesh, the genuine product, not just an imitation of Saigal. I had myself cast Mukesh in the Saigal format, and now, I myself brought him out of it with "jeevan sapna toot gaya" and "ab yaad na kar bhool jaa ae dil woh fasana", even getting him to sing, in his own distinct voice in the same "Anokha Pyar", a snatch of "yaad rakhna chaand taaron is suhani raat ko"." Was it then Anil Biswas who made Mukesh with "Anokha Pyar"? Biswas certainly put him through his first vocal steps, but then, in the very year in which he claims to have brought Mukesh out of his Saigal trance (1948), Naushad argues that it was he who per- formed this feat on Dilip Kumar with "Mela" and "Andaz". This is how Naushad argues it came about. Mukesh, says Naushad, had a major drinking problem in his formative years as a singer. "One day," says Naushad, "I caught him drunk during the daytime in Kardar Studios. And I told him: 'Mukeshchand, you've already proved with "dil jalta hai", that you can do a Saigal. What is it you are now out to prove - that you can out-do Saigal in the matter of drinking too?'" The shot went home. From that point, Mukesh took a firm grip on himself. "He was in tears," says Naushad, "as I offered to demonstrate that he had a voice identifiably his own - that he didn't need to imitate Saigal, or any other singer, to prove his vocal credentials." That is how, concludes Naushad, Mukesh came to sing for Dilip Kumar, in "Mela", such memorable numbers as "gaaye ja geet milan ke", "dharti ko aakash pukare", "main bhanwara tu hai phool" and "mera dil todnewale". After that of course, there is no disputing Naushad's point that it was he who turned Mukesh into a Dilip Kumar legend, on the "Andaaz" piano, with "toote na dil toote na", "hum aaj kahin dil kho baithe", "tu kahe agar jeevan bhar", and "jhoom jhoom ke naacho aaj". Dilip Kumar, adds Naushad, was not initially happy with the tunes for him in "Andaaz", considering them too simplis- tic. "But within moments of each one of these tunes being pictu- rised on him, Dilip was humming the song. That, I suppose," he smiles, "is the secret of Mukesh's vocal aura". If you turned to Shanker-Jaikishan, they came up with the theme that, even if Mukesh was a big hit on Dilip Kumar under Naushad initially, it was SJ who firmly fixed his vocals on Raj Kapoor. When the point was put to Raj Kapoor himself, he pointed out that it was he who had handpicked Mukesh, as his special voice, start- ing with his very first film "Aag" (scored by Ram Ganguly) and then got SJ to compose for him in the Mukeshian strain with "Bar- saat". So there you have a whole host of music persons claiming to have made Mukesh. Raj Kapoor's role in fortifying Mukesh's very spe- cial slot in films is not to be minimised, of course, but the central point remains that not one of them could have tapped the gold in Mukesh's throat if it had not been already there. Whether it be Anil Biswas's "ae jaan-e-jigar dil mein samaane aa jaa" in "Aaram", Naushad's "bhoolnewaale yaad na aa" in "Anokhi Ada", Roshan's "taara toote duniya dekhe" in "Malhar", Shanker's "yeh mera diwaanapan hai"

1Source: The Illustrated Weekly of India.

in "Yahudi", Jaikishan's "ae sanam jisne tujhe chaandsi soorat di hai" in "Diwana", Kalyanji- Anandji's "tumhen zindagi ke ujale mubarak" in "Poornima" or Laxmikant-Pyarelal's "tum bin jeevan kaise beeta", in "Anita", it was, in the end, the peculiar charisma in Mukesh's voice that did the trick. It was Mukesh's abiding humility that underplayed his own vocal contribution in ensuring that the song became a part of the listener's psyche. -- bye satish

RMIM Archive Article "134".

That guy who sang "Aansoon bhari hain..."

Posted by: apn@cs.buffalo.edu (Ajay P Nerurkar[2])

Author: Raju Bharatan

It happened at the HMV get-together to release Sahir- Khayyam's music for Yash Chopra's 'Kabhi Kabhi'. As "Kabhi kabhi mere dil mein khayal aata hai" played for the audience in Amitabh Bachchan's compelling voice, I heard another voice behind me gently speak up: "Just you wait and hear me after this -- talk of the sublime and the ridiculous." I turned, and Mukesh was behind me. It was just three months before that heart attack stilled his voice forever in fara- way Detroit. The one thing that never failed Mukesh Chand Mathur was his sense of humour. At the same function, Khayyam had said to me: "Just get a feel of Mukesh's pure rendition of "Main pal do pal ka shair hoon". His mardana voice has a rich human quality that makes it the most sentimental we have heard after K L Saigal. "Mukesh is in fine voice here in 'Kabhi Kabhi', of course," went on Khayyam, "Yet somehow I think he sang best for me in 'Phir Subah Hogi'. Topping my Mukesh favourites here is "Woh subah kabhi to aayegi". After that, I prefer, in that order, "Phir na keeje", "Aasmaan pe hai Khuda", and "Cheen-o-Arab hamara" ." "Each word from his lips was a pearl," reminisced Salil Chowdhury in August 1976. "No one could sing the way Mukesh did, with the right diction, inflexion and intonation. His vocal timbre was out of this world." "Almost each song I composed to capitalise on this timbre was an instant draw," noted the creator of "Nain hamare saanjh sakare" for 'Annadata'. "Initially, I thought of Hemant Kumar as Dilip Kumar's playback for "Suhana safar" in 'Madhumati'. But Shailendra persuaded me that Mukesh suited Dilip Kumar no less than he did Raj Kapoor." "The moment I recorded "Suhana safar," concluded Salil, "I knew Mukesh's vocals had captured the spirit of that verdant setting in 'Madhumati'. Yet not far behind "Suhana safar", I would rate "Zindagi khwab hai" from 'Jagte Raho" and "Kaise manaoon piawa" from 'Char Diwari'. In later years, Mukesh brought rare depth of expression to my "Kahin door jab din dhal jaaye" in "Suhana safar", I still feel, ranks as my best for Mukesh." It was on Dilip Kumar that "Suhana safar" came to be so evo- catively picturised by Bimal Roy in 'Madhumati'. And the truth is that Mukesh, on the silver screen, was first the voice of Dilip Kumar ('Mela' and 'Andaz' : 1948-49), and only then firmly fixed as the voice of Raj Kapoor. So the day Mukesh passed away, there was naturally a long queue at Raj's door. I saw no point in joining that queue, seeing Raj's views were sure to be carried by all the papers the following morning. This was when I suddenly recalled Mukesh's Dilip Kumar connection. Dilip's views make illuminating reading: "We have lost a peerless singer, one who has left a burning trail. I remember I was without a role for nearly a year, having refused film after film. The future looked bleak when (director S U) Sunny summoned me for 'Mela' and played to me "Mera dil todne waale". I was so fascinated by Mukesh's vocals in the song that I signed on for 'Mela' on the spot, the first and last time in my life I did such a thing." "And how can I forget what Mukesh accomplished for me in 'Andaz'," went on Dilip. "Those legendary numbers created by Naushad for Mukesh to sing for me: "Hum aaj kahin dil kho baithe", "Tu kahe agar jeevan bhar", "Toote na dil toote na", "Jhoom jhoom ke naacho aaj"." "You will be astonished to hear this, but I didn't like these four Mukesh numbers when they were first played to me. I felt they were too straight, my preference was for something like Lata's "Uthaye jaa unke sitam" and "Tod diya dil mera" in the same film, 'Andaz'. But Naushad explained to me that Mukesh's 'straight' sing- ing was his strength. 'Just wait and watch the effect,' he said. And the whole nation came to sing with Mukesh what I sang on that piano on 'Andaz'." "The strength of such 'straight' singing was brought home to me afresh," added Dilip, "in that 'Madhumati' melody that became a Suhana safar in itself -- through how many picturesque locales did I sing it. Actually, I had fallen in love with Mukesh's voice from the moment Anil Biswas (in 1947) recorded it to go on me in those lovely numbers from

2Source: Times of India (Aug 1995)

'Anokha Pyar': "Ab yaad na kar bhool ja ai dil woh fasana" and "Jeevan sapna toot gaya"." "In all the songs I have named, you will get the dis- tinct feel of the timbre of Mukesh's voice. His range might have been limited. But within that range, Mukesh was superb, as I discerned when he came to render for me "Yeh mera diwanapan hai" in 'Yahudi'," wound up Dilip. How did Mukesh estimate his own voice ? He subtly added to its mystique by studiedly ridiculing it. "You know why Lata Mangeshkar is the greatest singer in the world ?" Mukesh would demand to know. "Because there is an out-of-tune per- former called Mukesh singing opposite her to make her voice sound the best in the world !" Then changing tone, Mukesh would add: "Our best songs were put over at rates ranging from 150 to 300 rupees per number. But today (1976), if you lose a song, you are poorer by 10,000 rupees." That Rs. 10,000 was the rate Mukesh commanded for coming up with something like "Ek din bik jaayega maati ke mol". By the time RK's 'Dharam Karam' came, there was neither Shankar nor Shailendra. The combination was, at RK, the unlikely one of R D Burman and Majrooh. Yet Mukesh sat pat on Raj Kapoor to the end: "Jag mein reh jaayenge pyare tere bol". From Raj Kapoor to Amitabh Bachchan, from 'Aag' to 'Kabhi Kabhi', Mukesh came full circle. Yet Mukesh himself never needed to be in search of a hero. Even on a namby-pamby like Sudesh Kumar, Mukesh retained the gift of coming up with an all-time hit in the Yaman strain of "Saaranga teri yaad mein", composed by the obscure father, Sardar Malik, of a not-so-obscure music maker called Anu Malik. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "356".

Mukesh: Remembering papa

Author: Nitin Mukesh[3]

"From all the relationships one has - that of a husband, brother, son, friend, father, he was the best as a father. He was a doting parent - an indulgent, pampering father, so that we could have easily got spoilt but we didn't because he taught us values too. In fact the way he gave us our values was worth seeing. He'd never thrash us or be angry but in his own gentle way make us understand," his son reminesces. "But to go back to his life in films, he got his first break with Anil Biswas in the film Pehli Nazar. This is how it happened. It was in his sister's baraat that the great actor Motilal was one of the baraatis. People pushed my father to sing in front of him. He sang one of K.L.Saigal's songs and Motilal was struck by his voice. He invited him to Bombay and when he did go, true to his word, got him to sing for Pehli Nazar in which he was the hero. The song catapulted papa into fame immediately. Thereafter Motilalji kept papa in his own house as a son. That's when he started training. He'd had no training earlier. He was very young when he came to Bombay, almost penniless and one of 11 children, but it was his keen desire to become a singer that brought him here. He was a great fan of Saigalsaab. After that he continued to learn almost till the end of his life. He always said that he was a student even after achieving a stature few people do. Motilal was his benefactor. He got instant success, for a while it was an upswing careerwise. He was singing for Anil Biswas, Naushad and many greats. That's the time when he met my mother. They did not belong to the same community, my mother is a Gujarati and he a Mathur Kayasth. There was stiff opposition from her family so they eloped and Motilalji gave her kanyadaan. He was in fact the grandfather I've never met. Life was much better for my father now. Soon after, my elder sister was born and then, in 1950, I was born. Around this time he sang for Awaaraand his peak period started. Then again there was a lull in his career, for heaven knows what reason. This went on for almost five years and anyone else who'd seen so much popularity would've found it intolerable, particularly because one could not pinpoint why it happened. But papa was a great believer in destiny and God. This helped him survive and then the innate fondness of a person does pay - and papa was for me decidely the best, not just one of the best, human beings I've ever known and many others will share this view, his concern for people, his generosity was apparent . The way I see it, I have to make an attempt to be nice, but papa was a natural. There was no effort in his goodness whether with family members or with colleagues. "There used to be music directors who were starting their careers who couldn't afford to pay him and he'd say: 'Never mind, just give me a song to suit my style' and he'd walk away from so many recordings without payment. If you see the career graphs of a number of composers you'll find that Mukesh was their main voice. He had become the launching pad for many of them. When they did well they'd be grateful to him. "His concern for everybody was phenomenal. When we'd go for concerts we'd be put up in the best five star hotels while the musicians were put in less expensive hotels. This would bother him and he'd say, 'It'll be unfair to the organisers to expect them to put up everyone at an expensive hotel so it would be much simpler for me to shift to their hotel'. I'd be fuming but later I realised what he was doing and his musicians simply adored him. He was all this and more. "He taught us a sense of values by showing how disciplined he himself was. I remember there was a time when he didn't have money to even pay our school fees. My friends all had bicycles and I wanted one too and I was being very stubborn. So he got me one and an imported one at that because he didn't want me to feel that I was lacking anything, but he made me realise that I should look after it, he'd had to borrow money to buy it and just because I had a famous father I shouldn't think that I had a right to have the best. I wondered why he didn't have money because he was always famous. But fame and money don't necessarily go together. Similarly, he'd buy me the most expensive clothes

3 Source: indiaxs.com

and I'd come to know that he'd had to sell off something to be able to do so. He made us realise that we must not be wasteful. When I went to college, most of my friends had a car, so of course, I wanted one. The easiest thing was to go to mummy and tell her, which I did and she told papa - almost spontaneously. He took the keys of his own Fiat and handed them over to me. I was thrilled and drove the car for a few days till I realised that he was travelling by bus. That was the way in which I effectively got a smack in the face. He could've refused me and I would have revolted, but now I said 'why are you travelling by bus, buy a new car and you use the new one' and he said 'Beta, I cannot afford two cars and you must have a car so you use this!'. When I protested, he told me 'I would like you to have a car when you can afford to buy it'. Today I can say that it really is the most beautiful feeling to be able to buy a car for myself. After that, believe me, the car didn't matter to me at all, I could travel by bus or taxi without feeling anything. That was his way of driving his message home. He and I are both Cancerians. He was born on 22nd July 1923 and I on 27th June 1950. He was a true Cancerian. "I have a whole lifetime of memories. Yet another time, I was only 17, and I had started smoking in college. Those days everyone used to flaunt their triple five's and around that time he had gone to the States. When he returned he got me a carton of State Express cigarettes and a lighter. I was flustered. I said 'why?. Why have you bought these?'. He replied 'Son, I know that you smoke.' I was foolish enough to think that because I didn't smoke in front of him he wouldn't find out. But for a man who had so much time for his children, it was obvious that such a thing couldn't be hidden. He could've been strict, slapped me, got angry. I think I'd do that to my son, but all he said was 'Why did I have to discover through someone else that you smoke and why do you need to go out of the house to do it?' He added 'Remember that if you want to be a singer, this is not the best thing for you to do.' "That day onwards I gave up smoking. That's the way he taught the simple things of life to us. He was not a very educated man and he was very keen that we should all study and get degrees. He saw so many dreams, particularly for me. He sent me to the London School of Economics to study and I went, but my heart was not in it and I wanted to return. I rang up and told him 'Papa, I want to sing, I want to come back.' When I did come, I must've shattered so many of his dreams apart from causing him the embarrasment of telling people that his son had returned without completing his studies. But all he said was 'Yes, I know that you want to sing and now I'm sure that you will take it seriously.' He made me feel so welcome. He always felt and wrote in my song books 'Singing is a beautiful hobby but a painful profession'. He had seen the heartache of this profession - the pain, sometimes the rejection and he worried whether I would be able to handle it., whether I would have that dedication. "I can't hold a torch to the sort of dedication he had. He'd wake up at 5 o'clock even if he'd slept at a quarter to five and do his riyaz for a couple of hours then he'd go for a walk to Hanging Garden's. I think he'd befriended every flower in the garden. Till today when I walk there I meet at least 15 people who come up to me and say, 'We were your father's friends, the most beautiful flower in this garden has gone away'. "I do not remember even a single day of my life that I'd wake up and not find papa around. He'd give me my morning cup of milk, he could've left it to a servant but he wanted to do it himself. I try to do that for my kids, be present when they're having breakfast and share mealtimes with them. Papa loved children, Nitin was the last kid on his mind. I have this dear friend who lives across the road and everytime he needed a haircut I'd get one. Mukeshji would fill his Hillman car with eight to 10 kids and take us for a haircut. One wonders how he found time for such mundane chores because he was an extremely busy man. He'd take us for drives and picnics. On Marine drive, I remember when they'd put the tetrapods to avoid the crashing of the waves all the kids wanted to see them and he took us. It used to be just him and a car full of kids. I don't remember any other parent doing this, he was a child at heart. "We were on this tour and I was accompanying him to have a holiday. He was full of showing me the place because he'd seen it before. He was very emotional on this tour. He was already a heart patient, but he was very cheerful throughout the tour. It was Raksha Bandhan in Washington and my cousins tied rakhee to him amd me. Later on that day he sent me off for sightseeing and went to visit a doctor with a friend. But she was sworn to secrecy and I did not know of this till after his death. The doctor told him that he was sitting on a volcano and he needed by-pass surgery. But he had a commitment to Lataji and the organisers of the tour. So he asked the doctor if he could complete the tour

and the doctor said 'Yes', so long as he'd get the operation done immediately afterwards and didn't strain too much. That was perhaps the only lease he took. He wanted to call my mother and then have the operation after the tour. On the 22nd of August we were in Montreal where he developed a slight cold but he was still cheerful, it was a dream to see my father and Lataji perform together. The audiences were eating out of their hands, literally. At that time he called for me and said 'Tu do gaane gayega" I was very nervous and unprepared and said so. But he insisted and Lataji said 'Yes, you must sing, I'll introduce you', which she did, very beautifully saying 'Yeh Mukesh bhaiya ka beta hai, bahut honhaar hai, Mukesh bhaiya samaan hai.' Anyway I sang with Lataji and it worked. I received a thunderous ovation. I continued singing 5 to 6 songs and when I looked at him I saw tears streaming down his face. He was so happy. He told Lataji, 'Mujhe lagtaa hai ki Nitin dal roti kamaa lega'. Those were his favourite words, for him 'dal roti' was enough. Fans surrounded the hotel. When I returned I was a bit peeved with him but he said he wanted me to have my moment. Actually he had come back to talk to my mother, to tell her of my triumph. He'd never praise me to my face but then he told mummy that 'Kisi din hum Nitin ke shows par jaya karenge' 'tumhare bete ne kamaal kar diya'. These words still ring in my ears whenever I am performing. I feel he is watching me. On the 26th Aug we reached Detriot. We had a show on the 27th. He told me, 'Today will be the best show because it is your lucky number'. 27 is my birth number. It was our ninth show and we were on the ninth storey of the hotel. On the day of the concert he woke me at about 4.30 a.m. and said that he was going to have a shower and I should do riyaz to prepare for the evening. But when he went to the bathroom I had a premonition of something being wrong. I couldn't do riyaz. I knocked on the door and asked if he was all right and he was all right and he was a bit irritated and said 'Yes'. But in a few minutes he came out panting and asked me to put on the A.C. I called Lataji who came immediately. We called an ambulance and he was taken to the hospital. He kept clutching my hand and remembering his mother and my younger sister Amrita. Finally, he was wheeled in to the emergency ward and that was the last time I saw him. It was 27th August, 1976 in America and 28th August in India. I brought him back on the 30th on the same plane on which he was booked as a passenger. He'd promised my mother that he'd return and take her to the States for a holiday and perhaps for the surgery he'd been advised. I thought that fans would remember him for a few months, maybe a few years, then forget. But 18 years hence all I can say is that his popularity has multiplied. It is as if he has achieved immortality because of the wonderful soul he possessed.. The film industry has been immensely kind to me after his passing away - Lataji, Manoj Kumarji, Yash Chopraji all these people have been very supportive, but Raj Kapoor till he was alive, was the next father figure I had. He was always by me and Krishnaji is like a goddess, she advises and counsels me and is always there. This was the goodwill he had in the industry. Papa's favourite singers were Lataji and Geeta Duttji. In the earlier years he'd call Lataji by her first name but later he started calling her didi and when she protested that he was the elder why did he address her thus, he said that 'we all look up to you because of your art and I want everyone to call you didi'. I remember when she sang Megha chhaye adhi raat he was weeping. He was so concerned and caring about his co-singers. He simply adored Rafisaab and Kishore Kumarji. He said if Kishore Kumar so wanted, 'usne to kabki hum sabki chhutki kardi hoti'. Papa has sung the Ramcharitmanas and a number of devotional songs and listening to him I feel that if I had to listen to the voice of God this would be the voice. Such is the sanctity and the pathos of his voice. He experienced every emotion he sang of , whether it was a Jaane kahan gaye wo din or a non-filmi Pit maat sahayakswami sakha, tum hi ik naath hamare ho and it is the discerning listener who keeps him alive."

RMIM Archive Article "5".

Mohd. Rafi obit.

Author: Hari Vattyam (r2hmv@akronvm.bitnet)

Posted by: Nasir (noor@muug.mb.ca))

Date: 31st July

Hi Rafi Fans : This day in 1980 was a very sad one for us as our immortal hero left this world. Following is a brief biography of Rafi, I have tried to put in as much info as I could get. Hari Vattyam

Few people will doubt the fact that Md. Rafi was perhaps the greatest playback singers of all time. He left the world on this day in 1980, and I would like to present a brief biography of the late Md. Rafi. Md. Rafi was born on 24th September, 1924 in Kotla Sultanpur (presently in Pakistan after the separation). He was born in a middle class muslim family. His brother, Hamid, was the first to take notice of the divine gift in Rafi's voice. Then he decided to concentrate all his efforts in providing all the support need- ed by his younger brother to make it big in the music world. At a very young age Md. Rafi learnt Hindustani classical music under the renowned Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. Rafi's great interest and ded- ication payed off and he was soon trained to be one of the greatest singers of all time. Rafi had several opportunities to sing in public. His first op- portunity in films came under the music direction of Shyam Sunder in Lahore, for the film Gull-Balaach. The film was released on 28 February, 1944 and soon Rafi's first songs were being hummed by people, children and adults alike. During that time popular actor Nazeer heard of Rafi and his songs, and realizing his potential invited him to Bombay. Md. Rafi arrived in Bombay, and was to live there for the next 36 years. Again he had the opportunity to sing under the baton of Shyam Sunder for the film "GaoN ki Gori". Soon Rafi's fame spread far and wide and several eminent music directors signed him up. Rafi utilized these great opportunities and soon carved a niche for himself in the Hindi film world by singing for Naushad, Madan Mohan, S.D. Burman, Hemanth Kumar, Vasanth Desai, Sardaar Mul- lick, and others. In 1948 on the death of Mahatma Gandhi, Md. Rafi sang the song "Suno, suno ae duniya vaaloN, bapuji ki amar kahaani", written by Rajinder Krishan and music scored by Husnlal Bhagatram. Rafi's voice echoed the sadness of this great tragedy and listeners soon had their eyes filled with tears. Such was the magic in his voice and soon he became the favourite of millions. With the start of the famous "Binaca Geet Mala" in 1952, the program aired the im- mortal songs of the film "Baiju Bawra" and this really launched Rafi as a popular singer for all ages. Thousands of request for Rafi's songs poured into Sri Lanka Radio. Md. Rafi easily became the favourite of many music directors. His understanding and seriousness to give his best was well ap- preciated. It is also well known that several films with mediocre actors became hits just because of his songs. Rafi is also known to help young and upcoming music directors by singing for them and helping them out in scoring the music. Indeed he was loved by one and all his fans and colleagues. The great Rafi breathed his last on 31st July, 1980 in Bombay, a couple of days after he recorded his last song for the film "Aaspaas" ("Too kahin aaspaas hai dost" scored by LP). He may be absent from this world but his golden voice will echo for genera- tions to come.

RMIM Archive Article "35".

YAAD-e-RAFI: Naushad's Jaimala

Posted by: sm0e@Lehigh.EDU (SAMIUDDIN MOHAMMED)[4]

YAAD-e-RAFI: Naushad's Jaimala Today, July 31, is the death anniversary of one the best singers (the best, acc. to me) ever produced by the Indian film industry: MOHAMMED RAFI. It's been 14 years since Rafi Sahab left us, and yet his songs are as popular as they ever were during his life- time. As a tribute to my favourite singer, I am posting the typewritten version of a special Jaimala program presented by the Shehanshah-e-Mausiqui, Naushad Sahab, in the memory of Mohammed Rafi. [Jaimala was a popular Vividh Bharati program for "Fauji Bhai"s and the Vishesh Jaimala used to be presented by a famous (usually film) personality.] Although Rafi Sahab sang under the baton of almost all music directors of the Hindi film industry, his association with Naushad was special. Naushad was instrumental in grooming this highly talented singer, although he modestly says that he "merely showed Rafi the right direction". Here's the special Jaimala program which I have translated into English from the original Urdu version. The beauty of Naushad's refined Urdu is certainly lost in the translation, but I hope you will enjoy reading what the legendary music director has to say regarding Mohammed Rafi, the singer and the person. Portions which cud not be translated properly have been left in the origi- nal language. All errors in translation are mine. The songs played in the program are included in "[....]". May Rafi Sahab's soul rest in peace. Sami Mohammed (A MOHAMMED RAFI fan)

***** Yaad-e-Rafi (Naushad's Jaimala) ***** Fauji bhaion ko Naushad ka salaam! [Unfortunately, the initial statements made by Naushad in the program got erased from my cassette by mistake. Naushad recol- lects the moment when Rafi Sahab had first approached him with a letter of recommendation from someone] It was recommended that this young man, who possesses a beautiful voice, be given a chance to sing. I heard the young man sing a song or two and was highly impressed. I told him that one day he would become a great singer and asked him to keep in touch. Dur- ing the initial stages, I let the young man be a part of a chorus, and I think one such chorus "Hindustan ke hum hain, Hin- dustan humara...." might still be embedded in your memories. Later, in the film Dillagi, I had the opportunity to use his voice exclusively in a solo. As if it were predestined, this song became immensely popular throughout the country. This was my first song (solo) with him. With this song, Rafi Sahab not only carved a niche for himself, but also added a new dimension to my music.

[Tere kooche me armaanon ki duniya leke aaya hun

Tujhi par jaan dene ki tammanna leke aaya hun] After that, Rafi Sabab never looked back. He earned respect and his popularity touched the sky. The magic of his voice enthralled the whole world. His popularity, respect and wealth all increased tremendously, YET he ALWAYS remained modest. Like a fruit-bearing tree, the more he fructified, the more he bent in front of the world. His heart was filled with fear of God and the love for truth. Generosity and altruism were part of his system. God and truth were the only sources of inspiration for him. And he always used to say "Tum yahan jaisa karoge waisa bharoge, ye duniya ek mandir hai":

[Insaaf ka mandir hai ye, Bhagwan ka ghar hai.....] Here's an anecdote which aptly desribes his altruistic nature. My relationship with him had grown from a professional to an infor- mal one. Once he had to go to a foreign country for a live per- formance. He came up to me to seek advice: "Main bahar se koi aisi cheez lana chata hun jo GHareebon ke kaam aae". I suggested that he bring a dialysis machine and donate it to a hospital for

4Source: Jaimala - a popular Vividh Bharati program. A special Jaimala presented by Naushad in memory of Rafi.
---

the benefit of poor kidney patients who could not afford the med- ical costs. He liked the idea, but the foreign trip did not ma- terialize due to some reason. However, this incident left a per- manent mark of his altruistic nature on my heart. I cannot describe how great a person Rafi Sahab was. These are the small things which make a man immortal. For instance, people may for- get Shahjehan, but his legacy of love, the Taj Mahal will be remembered forever. Log Shahjehan ko bhool sakte hain, lekin uski mohabbat ki nishani, Taj Mahal ki soorat me quayamat tak zinda rahegi:

[Ek shahenshah ne banwaake hasin Taj Mahal

Saari Duniya ko mohabbat ki nishani di hai

Iske saae me sada pyaar ke charche honge

Quatm jo ho na sakegi woh kahani di hai...] Rafi Sahab adored Indian music (Bharateey Sangeet). He used to like singing semi-classical songs in his live programs. He always tried to make an attempt to propagate Indian music in foreign countries. For instance, whenever he sang "Madhuban me radhika nache...", he ALWAYS used to mention that it is based on Raag Hamir. Similarly, Raag Darbari would be mentioned before singing "O duniya ke rakhwaale...". In this manner, irrespective of whether the people understood the lyrics or not, they always ap- preciated Indian music. The following bhajan of his, which is based on Raag Malkaus, was admired throughout the world:

[Hari Om....

Man tarapat Hari darshan ko aaj

Man tarapat Hari darshan ko aaj...] Fauji Bhaio, it is your duty to safeguard the security of our country. In a similar fashion, it is the duty of us sangeetkars, to safeguard our traditional music and art. Not only that, it is also our duty to entertain you and raise your morale in times of crisis. In 1962, when our country was attacked by the enemy, a request was made in the presence of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, that a song be composed in order to boost the morale of our soldiers. So, Shakeel Badayuni Sahab penned down the lyrics, I composed the tune, and Rafi Sahab poured his heart out into this song in such a manner that whoever heard it was filled with patriotic fervour! Later, this song was included in the film, Leader:

[Apni aazaadi ko hum hargiz miTa sakte nahin

Sar kaTa sakte hain lekin, sar jhuka sakte nahin

Apni aazaadi ko hum hargiz miTa sakte nahin.....] Once, while Rafi Sahab and I were discussing a song, we were in- formed that Mukesh had breathed his last in America. Rafi Sahab was stunned. The only words which he uttered were: "Hai kitna achha gayak, kitna achha insaan, kitna pyaara saathi chala gaya" ! Some child switched on the radio at that time, and can you guess the song which was on then ?:

[Chale aaj tum jahaan se, hui zindagi paraaee

Tumhe mil gaya THikaana, hume maut bhi na aaee

O door ke musafir, humko bhi saath lele re

Humko bhi saath lele, hum reh gae akele.....] Rafi Sahab had gone through a lot of trouble and had made count- less sacrifices on his way to the top. But, alas! He had attained a position at which death itself envied him and wanted to make him it's own:

Mushkilen sangeet ki woh muskurakar jhelta

Tairta raagon ki lehron me, suron se khelta

BaRke Ganga jal se bhi pakeezah tar aakar thi

Uski har tarkeeb mausiqui ka ek shahkaar thi

Gayaki me uski beshak ek niraali shaan thi

Saaf pani ki tarah behti hui har taan thi

Dekhkar ye kaamyaabi muskura uTHi ajal (ajal death)

PaRgae sab raag pheeke, ho gaya funkaar shal (shal silent,still)

Gir paRa chashm-e-falak se sitara TooT kar

Ek naqsha ranj-o-GHam ka khinch gaya pesh-e-nazar

Bujh gaee phir shamma mehfil me andhera ho gaya

Zindagi ka taar TooTa aur taraana so gaya !!! One day we received the shocking news of Rafi Sahab's demise. The sad news spread like wild fire throughout the country. Songs turned into a dirge. The angels wept in the sky and tears were shed in the form of raindrops over his namaaz-e-janaza (funeral prayer). His funeral procession started amid heavy rain and thunder. People gathered on the top of buildings, trees and in windows to catch a last glimpse of their favourite singer. The procession reached the Juhu graveyard. Many famous film personal- ities were trying their best to control the crowd which had gath- ered to pay it's last respects to the voice which had warmed their hearts for decades. A voice which had become a part of their lives. Millions of eyes were watching one single glowing face; eyes which belonged not to any religion, caste or creed. And perhaps, that glowing face was saying this:

[Main TooTi hui ek nayya hun, mujhe chahe jidhar le jaao

Ji chaahe dubodo maujon me, ya saahil par le jaao

Main TooTi hui ek nayya hun, mujhe chahe jidhar le jaao..] Finally, the mortal body was interred in the same dust from which it was initially made. Log keh rahe the ek achha gayak chala gaya; ek achha insaan chala gaya. Koi keh raha tha ek achha dost chala gaya, aur main quabrastan (graveyard) ke ek hisse me sonch raha tha:

Kehta hai koi dil gaya, dilbar chala gaya

Saahil pukarta hai, samundar chala gaya

Lekin jo baat sach hai, woh kehta nahin koi

Duniya se mausiqui ka paembar chala gaya !!! (paembar messenger) Dust had returned to dust, and all that we were left with were sweet memories.

Har dil me bhaRakta hua woh saaz hai baaqui

Woh jism nahin hai magar aawaaz hai baaqui !!

[Ohoho, ho ho ho

Aaj puraani raahon se, koi mujhe aawaaz na de

Aaj puraani raahon se, koi mujhe aawaaz na de

Dard me doobe geet na de, GHam ka sisakta saaz na de

Dard me doobe geet na de, GHam ka sisakta saaz na de] Swargeeya gayak Mohammed Rafi ki yaad me, aaj ka vishesh Jaimala prastut kar rahe the, film jagat ke suprassidh sangeetkaar, Naushad. Sami Mohammed (A MOHAMMED RAFI fan)

RMIM Archive Article "37".

Rafiana.

Posted by: Satish Subramanian[5] (subraman@cs.umn.edu)

Author: Raju Bharatan

Here is an article written by Raju Bharatan on Rafi's 13th an- niversary, for the Illustrated Weekly of India. This article talks about how Rafi, regardless of the money involved, helped many a small time composer by agreeing to sing for them. - satish ----------

"Not one anniversary article on Mohd. Rafi pointedly touched on his contribution to the welfare of the small-time composer. Raju Bharatan looks beyond big names to pick some gems from Rafi's humble repertoire". Raju Bharatan writes: Could you believe that end-July signalled full 13 luckless years without the charismatic voice of Mohd. Rafi? I, for one, couldn't believe it, if only because I discerned that it was during these very 13 tuneless years that Rafi had grown more dominant in our vocal imaginations. Whether it be TV or radio, his vocals have been even more vibrant in the years he has been away from us. Shabbir KUmar, Anwar, Mohd. Aziz, their performing stature dimin- ishes with every year that passes without Rafi. So unique is Rafi's vocal mystique that he is always throwing up new areas, for example, not one anniversary article on Rafi touched on how this big-hearted tenor *made* small-time com- posers. It is this lacuna we now seek to fill in a resonant reply of some Rafi's all-time hits for the lesser-known music direc- tors. The idea is to spotlight Rafi's role in keeping the small-time composer professionally alive. Remember an obscure 1953 C-grade film called "Khoj" for which music was scored by Nissar Baazmi, the man who later went to Pak- istan and became such a big composer there that even Noorjehan and Mehdi Hassan considered it an honour to sing for him. Yet so long as Nissar Baazmi was in India, he somehow remained a C-grade composer. And at the time he did "Khoj", he was literally a no- body. This was when Baazmi approached Rafi to sing for the maximum Rs 50 that his producer could afford for the rendition of a composi- tion on which he prided himself. And Rafi charged Baazmi just the token Re 1 to produce for him, in Khoj, the memorable Radio Ceylon hit, "Chanda ka dil toot gaya roney lage hain sitaare". This Raja Mehdi Ali Khan lyric began with the cry: "Mohabbat aur wafaa kis tarah tauheen ki tu ne". What a compelling sense of expression Rafi brought to this tune of a struggling composer! Nor was Pandit Shivram a big-time composer when Rafi (this time for Rs 50) obliged him with an all-time hit that made its way from Radio Ceylon to the Binaca Geetmala. It was written by Bharat Vyas (for a shoestring-budget starrer of Nirupa Roy, Karan Dewan and Bhagwan) and it became, in Rafi's orotund voice, the surprise hit of the year 1955. My reference is to the "Oonchi Haveli" Rafi chartbuster: "Daulat ke jhoote nashe main ho choor garibon ki duniyan se rehte ho door". Who but Rafi could have scaled such a vocal peak from the pit-class for which "Oonchi Haveli" was made? To this day, "Daulat ke jhoote nashe main ho choor" remains the biggest hit given by Pandit Shivram. S. Mohinder may not exactly have been a C-grade composer, but the fact remains that he rarely worked in A-grade set-ups. Ranjit's "Papi", starring Nargis and Raj Kapoor, was one of those rare films in which S. Mohinder had the support of a hit star-team. But the problem was that, but the time "Papi" came in 1953, Mukesh was 'settled' as the voice of Raj Kapoor. Even so Sardar Mohinder made bold to opt for Rafi for Raj! And that too in the climax of Papi! Only, by the time the climax of "Papi" came to be reached, the film had already been dismissed by the audience as a visual disaster. Yet the same audience which, I remember, had virtually gone to sleep in Delhi's Regal Cinema came to sudden life and be- gan tapping its feet to the Rafi rhythm of "Tera kaam hai jalna parwaane chahe shama jale ya na jale". That audience clearly felt that Rafi was made for Raj Kapoor. Who knows, Rafi, given the chance, might have been good on Raj Kapoor too! Come Dilip Kumar, come Raj Kapoor, come Dev Anand, Rafi was a vocal

5Source: Illustrated Weekly of India (1993)

match for any hero, big or small. The hero of "Mirza Ghalib" was Bharat Bhooshan, the hero in Dev- das was Dilip Kumar. And both heroes in both films had plumped for the soft vocals of Talat Mahmood. Rafi therefore had only one 'atmospheric' song each in these two films. Yet, even in these two films in which Talat dominated so sentimentally, Rafi left his own distinct individual impact - under Ghulam Mohammad with "Hai has ki har ek unke ishare mein nishaan aur" (Mirza Ghalib), under Dada Burman with "Manzil ki chaah mein" (Devdas). Neither Talat, nor Mukesh, nor Kishore, nor Hemant, nor even Manna Dey, could ever take Rafi for granted. "I might have been better trained classically by my uncle K. C. Dey," Manna once told me, "but if Rafi was singing in the same film as I was, I never could be sure he wouldn't overtake me." The same Manna Dey had given of his best to the hapless composer, Babul, in "Reshmi Roomal", through "Zulfon ki ghata lekar saawan ki pari aaye" (with Asha) and "Aankh mein shokhi lab pe tabassum" (with Suman). In the same "Reshmi Roomal", Babul had made a tel- ling impression with Talat, too, through "Jab chhaye kabhi saawan ki ghata". Therefore, since Mukesh too had scored in the same "Reshmi Roomal" through "Gardish mein ho taare", there was no reason for Babul to switch to Rafi when he came to scoring "Naqli Nawaab" on the same Manoj Kumar. Yet Babul did switch to Rafi. And somewhere at the back of his mind, Rafi must have known that, in Babul's recording room, the competition was with Talat, Mukesh and Manna Dey alike. Therefore regardless of the fact that he was now being paid only Rs 200 for each song in "Naqli Nawab", Rafi came up, for Babul, with such heart-stealers as "Tum poochhte ho ishq bala hai ke nahin hai" and "Allah jaane maula jaane". Nor was Rafi's best reserved for just Babul, who had broken away from the team of Bipin-Babul. Rafi produced for Bipin (Datta) too, in "Yeh Bambai Hai" the N53097 two sided hit: "Yeh bambai shehar ka bada naam hai". Likewise, G.S. Kohli never rose above the B-grade film. Yet, given the aid of Rafi's vocals, Kohli was able to come up, in "Lambe Haath", with an all-time hit, for our super-patriotic Vividh Bharathi, in the form of "Pyaar ki raah dikha duniya ko". The message in this "Lambe Haath" hit, "Tum mein hi koyi Gautam honga tum mein hi koyi Gandhi", remains distinctly RAFIan. G. S. Kohli was at least a name that appeared on the banner of half a dozen films. But Dulal Sen, you saw his name on the banner of only one film: "Black Prince". Yet even in that one film, what depth of feeling Rafi brought to the rendition of Dulal Sen's "Nigahen na phero chale haayenge hum", as put over by Rafi for Dulal Sen in "Black Prince", that lingers in Radio Ceylon memory. It was Shivkumar Saroj, the sensitive Radio Ceylon announcer, who drew our attention first to the tuning artistry of another modest composer: C Arjun. When I met C Arjun much later, he told me that he felt very proud that he had at least created a ghazal that could come somewhere near a Madan Mohan composition. "I wanted special attention to this my coveted ghazal from my singer but all good singers available were bigger than the film for which I had composed it!" revealed Arjun. "It was with great hesitation, therefore, that I approached Rafi Saab to render my ghazal, so feelingly written by Indivar. And Rafi Saab, without bothering about the small payment we were in a position to make, said it was one of the best ghazals that had fallen to his lot and he would give it everything that he had." Rafi certainly gave that C Arjun ghazal everything he had, that is how it came over to us "Paas baitho tabiyat behal jaayegi maut bhi aa gayi to hal jaayegi" in "Punarmilan". This ghazal proves, if proof is needed, that no composer was too small for Rafi as long as the composition was great. After all, who were Lala-Asad-Sattar but three instrumentalists who had turned music directors. Yet for even such a stunt trio trying to combine as a music director team, Rafi proved a salvation with such a surpassingly lovely solo in Sangram as: "Main to tere ha- seen khayalon mein kho gaya". To help every little composer trying to gain a toe-hold in the quicksands of filmdom was Rafi's singing philosophy. Sapan- Jagmohan, as a duo, got their break in Sadashiv Row Kavi's "Be- gaana", with Suprita Chowdhury. It was Sapan-Jagmohan's first film and the two had to show spot results to make headway. Jagmohan (of this team) had sung 10 years earlier, in Kishore Sahu's "Hamlet", the hit duet with Rafi: "Ghir ghir aaye badarvaa re kaare". On the strength of this connection, Jagmohan (Bakshi) approached Rafi to render what Sapan-Jagmohan felt was their prize composition in "Begaana". And Rafi made this prize compo- sition unforgettable as one he could by articulating it as "Phir woh bhooli si yaad aayee hai". Remember, "Phir woh bhooli si yaad aayee hai" was just a good composition in the hands of Sapan-Jagmohan. It was left to Rafi to immortalise it as Sapan- Jagmohan's best

ever composition by rendering it in a style no singer could excel. Annu's father Sardar Maalik, though highly talented, never made it to the big league. "Bachpan" therefore was just another pulp film for which Sardar Maalik was scoring the music. And it would have been forgotten as just another potboiler churned out by our industry, but for Rafi, under Sardar's baton, arrested our atten- tion with "Mujhe tum se mohabbat hai magar main keh nahin sakta". The tune came first, the money after, in the case of Rafi. But for the instinctually generous way in which Rafi adjusted his charges for the small composer, we would have not got, in his voice, from Iqbal Quraishi "Subah na aaye shaam na aaye" (from "Cha Cha Cha"), not from Sonik-Omi "Dono ne kiya tha pyaar magar mujhe yaad raha tu bhool gayi meri" (from "Mahua"). In the rare film in which Prem Dhavan doubled as song writer and song composer, like in "Pavitra Papi", Rafi came up with a memor- able hit for him like: "Allah hi Allah kar pyare Allah hi Allah". The Rafi touch it could turn any disc into gold!

RMIM Archive Article "42".

Padmashree Mohammed Rafi

Posted by: Mavani, Jagat N. (MAVANI@KGNVMT.VNET.IBM.COM)

Written by: Mavani, Jagat N.

PADMA SHREE MOHAMMED RAFI

SABHI SE JUDA JISKI ANDAZ HAI

JAMI TA FALAK JISKI PARVAZ HAI

WAHI JISPE SANGEET KO NAAZ HAI

MOHD. RAFI KI WO AAWAZ HAI

Mohd. Rafi was born on the 24th of December, 1924 in kotla sul- tanpur, a small town in Punjab (now part of the Punjab province of Pakistan). Interested from childhood in music, he obtained formal training in classical music from Ustad Khan Abdul Wahid Sahab. K.L. Saigal once said to him "Rafi the magic of your voice will be recognized by this whole world". Rafi's recollection of that meeting in his own words "When Saigal was tapping me on my head I felt that the lord himself was giving me the keys to his king- dom". His first break into the world of films came in 1940 when he sang for the punjabi film 'Gulbaloch'. The music director was Shyam Sunder and the song was "Suniye Hiriye ni, teri yaad ne bahut sa- taya..". This song went on to become a hit. It was under Shyam Sunder again that he sang for his first hindi film in 1944. The film was 'Gaon ki gori'. His debut as a singer for Dilip Kumar came in Shaket Hussein's film but it was another song from the same film sung with Noor Jehan that became a hit "Yahan badla wafa ka bewafai ke siva kya hai..". The popularity of this song put Rafi's singing career on a firm footing. To add to the list, this was also the film in which Rafi had a small acting part. His great moment arrived in 1947 when he was asked to sing Ra- jinder Krishan's song depicting the life of Mahatma Gandhi. "Suno Suno ae duniya walo bapuji ki amar kahani..". That same year, he was also invited by Jawaharlal Nehru to sing at his house and next year on the anniversary of the independence day he received a silver medal from Nehru. In 1965 he was awarded the title of Padma Shree by the Indian Government. It was said in the world of Bombay's film industry that no one had ever heard of a music director saying that a particular song was not Rafi's type. From classical tunes, gazals, quawalis to the wild Shammi Kapoor songs, Rafi's range was fantastic. Almost all music directors used Rafi's voice to give life and a magical quality to their tunes. Rafi used to be concerned about the actors for whom the songs were recorded and went to great lengths to change his style to suit the actor and the scene. Johnny walker recalled the days when Rafi spent time with him trying to match his singing with the actor's style, accent and pronunciation. Shanker Jaikishen the unquestioned masters of hindi film music used the talents of Rafi for a host of their films. The song "Baharo phool barsao, mera meheboob aaya hai..." went on to win an award. However it was his association with Naushad that produced some of his greatest songs. Rafi who was a devout muslim refrained from smoking and drinking alcohol. His neat appearance, mild manners, timely arrival at recording studios endeared him to Naushad. This association flowered at its peak in the music for 'Baiju Bawra'. On hearing about his death Naushad said "For those who say that I helped Rafi in his career, I would say that I only showed him a way. It was his voice that enriched my music. The void left by his death cannot be filled. Yes that is impossible." Raj kapoor's reaction on hearing the news about Rafi's death "In the world of music, the uncrowned king of singing has left us".

KIS KAAM KI YE DUNIYA

JO JINDAGI SE KEHLE RE

HUM KO BHI SAATH LE LE

HUM RAHE GAYE AKELE

RMIM Archive Article "58".

The Immortal Rafi

Author: Masood Ansari[6]

Posted by: pkd@duke.cs.duke.edu (Pavan Kumar Desikan) Transcribed by: Srichand (IIT Madras) and Ravindra.U.V. (uvr@tata_elxsi.soft.net)

PART I MOHAMMED RAFI: THE SONG GOES ON

It was on July 31, 1980, during the holy month of Ramzan, that Indian filmdom lost one of its most versatile playback singers, Mohammed Rafi. The date of his passing away was, perhaps, divinely pre-ordained, for it is said that one who dies in the holy month goes to heaven. There was no person more deserving of that status than the pious and God-fearing Rafi, who never touched a drop of alcohol, who never told a lie, who never had a harsh word for anyone, and who worshipped his work. A man whose songs wiped away many a sorrowful tear from the eyes of those who were struggling under the burden of life and brought tears of ecstatic joy to many more. Within hours of getting news of Rafi's untimely demise, hundreds of mourners gathered at his residence in Bandra to pay their last homage to a man who had them bound by the magic spell of his voice for nearly four decades. Thousands braved a heavy downpour and joined the funeral procession the next day. Most of them could not believe that Rafi was no more - just a few days ago, many of them had heard him singing at his best at Bombay's Shanmuganada Hall for three hours. This was destined to be his last public appearance. Today, nearly a decade and a half after Rafi's death, it is still difficult to believe that one like him is no more. Rafi lives on, eternally, in his songs. Born on December 24, 1924, in Punjab's Amritsar district, Rafi showed an aptitude for music at a very early age. His father used to recite religious poetry in praise of God and the Prophet, and his elder brother Mohammed Deen was also a considerably good classical singer. Young Rafi was sent for training first with Ustad Chote Ghulam Ali Khan, then he took classes from Pandit Jawaharlal Mathu and Feroze Nizami. He was greatly influenced and encouraged by Ustad Abdul Waheed Khan. Rafi belonged to a very orthodox and conservative Muslim family. He used to sing at friends' places. During one such occasion, when Rafi was still only 15, Nasir Khan, one of the top producer-actor- playback singers in films, heard him sing and offered to take him to Bombay and groom him as a playback singer. Nasir Khan sought permission from Rafi's father, but the latter refused point blank. The very idea of Rafi taking up singing for films as a career was severely frowned upon. Rafi was being trained in classical music at that time by Ustad Abdul Waheed Khan. When Nasir Khan persisted with the offer, Rafi's elder brother, Deen, convinced his father to let Rafi go to Bombay. With great reluctance, Rafi's father agreed to this. Before leaving for Bombay, Rafi had already recorded his maiden film song for Gul Baluch, a Punjabi film, on February 28, 1941. The song became very popular and he was invited by the Lahore radio station to be a permanent singer with it. Rafi made his debut as a playback singer in Bombay in 1942 with Laila Majnu, a Nazir-Swarnalata starrer with music by the late Pandit Govindram. He sang a qawwali as part of a chorus, and even did a bit role in the film. Later on, he acted films like Samaj Ko Badal Dalo and Jugnu. In Gaon Ki Gori, he sang a duet with Noor Jehan, the then reigning queen of Indian film music, under the baton of Shyam Sunder. Then, somehow, Rafi was able to get a recommandation letter from Naushad's father and met the maestro, who was then composing music for Pahle Aap. Naushad offered the young singer a place in the chorus of the song "Hindustan Ke Hum Hain, Hindustan Hamara" along with Alauddin. After that he was given a chance to sing a line in a chorus for Naushad's Shahjehan, which had K.L.Saigal's immortal voice in it too. After these initial choruses, Rafi now wanted to sing solos and he was given that break also by Naushad, who had by then become not only a good friend of Rafi's but a great fan as well. This song was in Dillagi and the song was "Is Duniya

6Source: Deccan Chronicle.

Mein Aye Dil Walon Dil Ka Lagana Khel Nahin," which brought him to the forefront of playback singing alongwith K.L. Saigal, G.M. Durrani, Talat Mahmood and others. His impeccable voice quality and immaculate singing led to inevitable comparisons with these stalwarts and the comparisons were always favourable. The climb that started then stopped only when Rafi breathed his last. ----

PART II MOHAMMED RAFI: THE SONG GOES ON

Rafi saab's speciality was his versatility and a very vast range. In his 38-year career, he rendered more than 28,000 songs, which include the whole range sung in Hindi films. Take the classicals like 'O Duniya Ke Rakhwale,' 'Madhuban Mein Radhika Naache Re,' or "thumris" like 'Aye Na Baalam Wada Karke' and 'Gori Tere Nainva Kajra Ban.' There were folk songs like 'Nain Lad Jai Hain' and 'Tan Rang Lo Ji Aaj Man Rang Lo,' bhajans like 'Mujhko Shiv Shankar Mil Gaye' and 'Duniya Na Bhaaye Mujhe,' and "geets" and ghazals like 'Suhani Raat Dhal Chuki,' 'Abhi Na Jao Chhod Kar,' 'Chaudvin Ka Chand Ho' and 'Ai Mere Shah-e-Khooban.' The incredible variety of the man encompasses ghazals like 'Tere Kooche Mein Armanon Ki Duniya,' 'Teri Zulfon Se Judaai To Nahin Maangi Thi,' and the evergreen 'Tumse Se Izhaar-e-haal Kar Baithe,' patriotic songs like 'Watan Ki Raah Mein Watan Ke Naujawan Shaheed Ho,' sentimental songs like 'Mayoos To Hoon Wade Se Tere' and 'Tukde Hain Mere Dil Ke.' There were light songs like 'Sar Jo Tera Chakraye,' 'Aye Dil Hai Mushkil Jeena Yahan,' and 'Jangal Mein Mor Naacha Kisi Ne Na Dekha,' and non-filmi ghazals like 'Na Kisi Ki Aankh Ka Noor Hoon' and 'Lagta Nahin Hai Dil Mera.' He sang fast numbers like 'Chahe Koi Mujhe Junglee Kahe,' 'Aji Aisa Mouka Phir Kahan Milega,' and qawwalis like 'Meri Tasveer Leke Kya Karoge,' 'Chaandi Ka Badan' and 'Yeh Ishq Ishq Hai...' The list is practically endless and to include every variety of song that Rafi saab sang would be a Herculean task if not exactly an impossible ne. There probably wasn't a single hero through almost three decades for whom Rafi saab did not playback. From Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand, Raj Kapoor, Shammi Kapoor, Biswajit, Joy Mukherjee, Rajendra Kumar, Raj Kumar, Guru Dutt, Dharmendra, Sashi Kapoor, Sunil Dutt, Sanjeev Kumar, down the ages to Rajesh Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan, Rishi Kapoor and other youngsters, the list of heroes for whom Rafi Saab sang is virtually endless. Then there were others like Johnny Walker, I.S. Johar and Mehmood. The vast variety of songs that Rafi saab sang can well be imagined. I still remeber, as if it were yesterday, meeting him backstage for an interview during one of his last performances in Bombay. That was in May 1980. He seemed greatly disillusioned with the deteriorating standards of film music. He seemed visibly pained that the emerging trend among music directors of signing films by the dozen - and at the overwork contributing towards deteriorating the quality of the music in films. Lapsing into a flashback, Rafi saab had said "Film-making wasn't merely a business proposition during those days when institutions reigned supreme and freelancing hadn't become popular in the film industry. Believe it or not, I used to be paid Rs.75/- in those days for a song! That was a fortune in those days. When I entered the line, there were, of course, popular singers like Saigal saab, G.M. Durrani and Khan Mastana. Instead of considering me as competition, they encouraged me to give my best. "In fact the first time I met Saigal saab was at Lahore, where he had come to give a concert. The mike had failed at the last minute. While it was being set right, I was asked to keep the audience engaged by singing a couple of songs. I was only 15 then. I had not yet met Nasir Khan or Shyam Sunder. Saigal saab blessed me that day and predicted that a day would come when I would be a much sought-after singer". How true Saigal's prediction came to be! Mohammed Rafi was one of the most popular playback singers for Hindi films till he breathed his last. -

Department of Computer Science, Duke University, Durham, NC 27708-0129 Internet: pkd@cs.duke.edu

RMIM Archive Article "165".

First recorded songs of Rafi

Posted by: Surjit Singh[7] dussh@ttacs.ttu.edu

1944 (2 male duets)

Song: tum dillii me.n aagaare
Film: pahale aap
MD:-Naushaad
Lyr:-D.N. Madhok
Sing:-Rafi and Shaam

Song: ek baar unhe.n milaa de
Film: pahale aap
MD:-Naushaad
Lyr:-D.N. Madhok
Sing:-Rafi and Shaam

1945 (5 solos, 2 female duets, 1 triple and 2 with chorus = 10)

Song: dil diye chale, dil liye chale
Film:-Begam
MD:-Hari Prasanna Daas
Lyr:-G. S. Nepaalii
Sing:-Rafi and Mohanataaraa Talapade

Song: ai dile nakaam tamannaa
Film:-Hamaaraa Sansaar
MD:-Gobind Raam
Lyr:-Ramesh Guptaa
Sing:-Rafi

Song: chhoTii sii ek banaae.nge nayyaa
Film:-Hamaaraa Sansaar
MD:-Gobind Raam
Lyr:-Ramesh Guptaa
Sing:-Rafi, zoharaa, shamshaad

Song: Topii vaale baabuu ne dil chhiinaa re
Film:-kul kalank
MD:-allaa rakkhaa qureshii

7Source: "The Encyclopaedia of Hindi Film Songs," vol. II "Listeners' Bulletin"

Lyr:-ruupabaanii
Sing:-Rafi and amiirbaaii

Song: teraa jalavaa jisane dekhaa
Film:-lailaa majanuun
MD:-gobind raam
Lyr:-tanaviir naqavii
Sing:-Rafi and baatish and chorus

Comment: The qavaalii from lailaa majanuu.n is considered to be his first recorded song in a hindii movie by the authorities I have always found to be the most accurate.

Song: pyaar karanaa hii pa.Degaa ek din
Film:-sharabatii aa.Nkhe.n
MD:-firoz nizaamii
Lyr:-panDit indra
Sing:-Rafi

Song: bahut muKtasar hai hamaarii kahaanii
Film:-sharabatii aa.Nkhe.n
MD:-firoz nizaamii
Lyr:-tanaviir naqavii
Sing:-Rafi

Song: ab naa biin bajaa snehii
Film:-sharabatii aa.Nkhe.n
MD:-firoz nizaamii
Lyr:-panDit indra
Sing:-Rafi

Song: mai.n kheto.n kaa panchhii
Film:-village girl
MD:-shyamm sundar
Lyr:-valii saahib,
Sing:-Rafi, durraanii and chorus

Song: haay re duniyaa, jhuuThon kaa darabaar
Film:-ziinat
MD:-hafiiz Kaa.N
Lyr:-not known,
Sing:-Rafi

1946 (9 solos, 11 female duets, 4 with chorus = 24)

Song: to.Do to.Do to.Do dil ke taar
Film:-amar raaj
MD:-firoz nizaamii
Lyr:-panDit faanii
Sing:-Rafi

Song: praaN tyaag kar tuune diivaanii
Film:-amar raaj
MD:-firoz nizaamii
Lyr:-panDit faanii
Sing:-Rafi

Song: mai.n jab chhe.Duun prem taraanaa
Film:-amar raaj
MD:-firoz nizaamii
Lyr:-panDit faanii
Sing:-Rafi, mohanataaraa talapaDe

Song: teraa khilonaa TuuTaa baalak
Film:-anamol gha.Dii
MD:-naushaad
Lyr:-tanaviir naqavii
Sing:-Rafi

Song: ruukhii suukhii mai.n khaa luungii
Film:-insaaf
MD:-hari prasann daas
Lyr:-d. n. madhok
Sing:-Rafi and hamiidaa baano

Song: jaake parades piyaa bhuul naa jaanaa
Film:-meraa giit
MD:-unknown
Lyr:-ramesh guptaa
Sing:-Rafi

Song: meraa svapan ba.Daa suhaanaa
Film:-meraa giit
MD:-unknown
Lyr:-ramesh guptaa
Sing:-Rafi

Song: suue manzil ba.Dhaaye chalaa chal
Film:-rangabhuumii
MD:-premnaath

Lyr:-panDit faanii
Sing:-Rafi and chorus

Song: Kud samajh lo ki iltazaa kyaa hai
Film:-rangabhuumii
MD:-premnaath
Lyr:-aarzuu laKanavii
Sing:-Rafi and shamashaad

Song: aag lagii tan man dhan sab me.n
Film:-rangabhuumii
MD:-premnaath
Lyr:-aarzuu laKanavii
Sing:-Rafi and shamashaad

Song: jo aage ba.Dhe usako piichhe haTaa de
Film:-rangabhuumii
MD:-premnaath
Lyr:-panDit faanii
Sing:-Rafi and shamashaad

Song: yah nayan kyo.n sharmaa gaye
Film:-rasiilii
MD:-hanumaan prasaad
Lyr:-gaafil haranaalavii
Sing:-Rafi and shamashaad

Song: dil mujhako jalaataa hai mai.n dil ko jalaatii huu.N
Film:-rasiilii
MD:-hanumaan prasaad
Lyr:-hanumaan prasaad
Sing:-Rafi and shamashaad

Song: rahe to kaise rahe, dil pe iKatyaar mujhe
Film:-room number 9
MD:-rashiid atre
Lyr:-naKashab jaaraachavii
Sing:-Rafi

Song: baalaa jobanavaa sambhaalaa naa jaaye
Film:-ruupaa
MD:-gobind raam
Lyr:-unknown
Sing:-Rafi and shamashaad

Song: vatan kii amaanat merii zindagii hai
Film:-ruupaa

MD:-gobind raam
Lyr:-unknown
Sing:-Rafi and shamashaad and chorus

Song: ab vo hamaare ho gaye, iqaraar kare.n yaa naa kare.n
Film:-safar
MD:-C. raamachandra
Lyr:-g. s. nepaalii
Sing:-Rafi

Song: kah ke bhii naa aae tum, ab chhupane lage taare,
Film:-safar
MD:-C. raamachandra
Lyr:-g. s. nepaalii
Sing:-Rafi

Song: aashiqo.n kaa qaafilaa
Film:-sassii punnuu
MD:-gobind raam
Lyr:-i. c. kapuur
Singer:-Rafi, durraanii and chorus

Song: mere sapano.n kii raanii
Film:-shaahajahaa.N
MD:-naushaad
Lyr:-majaruuh sultanapuri
Sing:-Rafi, saigal and chorus

Song: daataa jii teraa bhed naa paayaa
Film:-sonaa chaa.Ndii
MD:-tufail faaruuqii
Lyr:-shamiim
Sing:-Rafi

Song: ab ke bhagavaan dayaa kare.nge,
Film:-sonaa chaa.Ndii
MD:-tufail faaruuqii
Lyr:-valii saahib
Sing:-Rafi and shmashaad

Song: baiThe hai.n tere dar pe kuchh kara ke uThenge,
Film:-sonaa chaa.Ndii
MD:-tufail faaruuqii
Lyr:-valii saahib
Sing:-Rafi and shmashaad

Song: man kii suunii nagariyaa suhaanii banii

Film:-sonaa chaa.Ndii
MD:-tufail faaruuqii
Lyr:-valii saahib
Sing:-Rafi and amiirbaaii

RMIM Archive Article "188".

Mohd. Rafi - A Tribute

Posted by: Harish Suvarna[8] sundu@mti.sgi.com

Arvind Agarwalla arvind@fact.com.sg

Author: Pradyot Lal

"Maen zindagi ka saath nibhata chala gaya" ------ ----------

Mohd. Rafi - "Maen zindagi ka saath nibhata chala gaya"

------- Sixteen years back, he fell silent forever. But his golden voice still reverberates. For his hardcore fans, Mohammed Rafi, or Rafisaab, is still alive. A tribute to the legendary playback sinnger on his death anniversary. There is just that overwhelming feeling of gratitude when you hear Mohammad Rafi sing Aise To Na Dekho; or Ahbi Naa Jao Chhod Kar; or, Maine Shaayad Tumhein Pahle Bhi Kahin Dekha Hai. And hundreds of such other melodies. One is just plain grateful to have been alive to listen to such magic. What voice, and what range! Everything came so easy to him; the most intricate raag or taan, or whatever else music directors could think of through a musical journey lasting four decades, Certain aspects of the Rafi saga brook on debate: that, for instance, he was perhaps the only genuine or real playback singer films have had. You listen to Rafi and you instantly identify the face to go with the song. In fact, Rafi has been one of the greatest actors we have had, in the sense that he could effortlessly shift from one mood to another. Just recall that incomparable ghazal - Hum Bekhudi Mein Unko Pukaare Chale Gaye; or, Madhuban Mein Radhika Naache Re; or, Lal Lal Gaal Jaan Pe Hai Laagoo. This was real versatility; and I unhesitatingly say this in spite of being a known Kishore Kumar fan. Of course, my idol could also sing everything with equal felicity. But it does seem hard, even for a die - hard Kishore fan like this writer, to associate a song like Tu Ganga Ki Mauj Maen with the vocals of Kishore Kumar. Rafi was born to sing that memorable number - no one else could have done better than him. Of course, during the latter part of his career, Rafi was unable to stand up to the scorching pace set by Kishore Kumar; but throughout the Fifties and Sixties, he almost singlehandedly dominated film music. It is not that he had no competition: Talat, Hemant, Manna Dey, Mukesh and of course, Kishore were all there. All of them were fine singers, but Rafi was still the best because he was more complete than any of them. Talat, Mukesh and Hemant, in fact, were basically singers with a limited range. Kishore was too busy acting in films to give much thought or attention to his singing, while Manna Dey, as he himself has graciously acknowledged on numerous occasions, was no match to Rafi even in the pukka numbers he specialised in. Just before he died, I had the privilege of a longish meeting with that prince among composers, Salil Choudhury. Salilda, but of course, was a remarkably articulate man. One asked him why, over his musical years, he had used Rafi so sparingly. Salilda readily agreed that Talat and Mukesh were the two singers he most easily identified with, but hastened to add: "But Rafisaab was Rafisaab. For that Maya number, Koi Sone Ke Dil Waala, Koi Chaandi Ke Dil Waala, I could not have even thought of using any other singer." He illustrated his point by referring to the S D Burman number from Meri Soorat Teri Aankhen: Tere Bin Soone, Nayan Hamaare. Salilda said that after one has heard Rafi sing the song, it becomes impossible to associate it with any other singer. Such was the complete identification between the singer and the song. One can think of so many songs - especially songs sung by unabashed Rafi clones like Mahendra Kapoor (please don't you dare compare the two singers though!) which Rafi would have certainly sung much better. But there are few, if any, songs Rafi sang that could have been better sung by another singer ... that much is for sure. No. This is no hagiography; after all, who could have

8Source: The Asian Age (Calcutta) and India News Network.

sung Zindagi Bhar Nahin Bhulegi Who Barsaat Ki Raat; or Aaj Ki Raat Badi Shokh Badi Natkhat Hai as Rafi did? Or, even songs like Pukaarta Chala Hoon Maen and Deewana Mastana Hua Dil. Unlike, say, Kishore who was patronised mainly by the two Burmans, Rafi got along musically with every music director, with the possible exception of Anil Biswas, who once created a totally avoidable furore by asserting that Rafi was no singer! Even Kishore Kumar, who had received the great maestro's blessings at the expense of Rafi, was forced to send a letter to the editor of Filmfare in which he admitted that "I am a Rafi fan!" Sterile controversies like who sang more songs - Lata or Rafi, or whose contribution to popular film music is greater are just that - sterile, and a waste of time. Similarly, to try and compare Rafi with any other singer is also a meaningless pastime. After all, we must thank our stars that we have had a succession of fine singers from K L Saigal down to say, Kishore Kumar, and Rafi was quite the prince among them. The moon among stars, so to speak. In a manner of speaking, Rafi bade a timely musical adieu from the scene; for, the kind of music that has happened from the late Saventies onwards would have made it very difficult for Rafi to retain his musical sanity. It may be a harsh thing to say; but there is no harm in stating the objective truth. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "210".

Rafi - The Immortal!

Posted by: Satish Subramanian[9] (subraman@cs.umn.edu)

Author: Imran Kidwai ----------

Zindagi to bewafa hai, ek din thukraayegi maut mehbooba hai apne saath lekar jaayegi!
Three years after singing this song, Mohd. Rafi passed away on July 31st, 1980. It has been 15 years now and till this world exists, there is never going to be a replacement for Mohd. Rafi. It is unusual that in a country whose population exceeds 850 million they have, as yet, failed to find a suitable voice to sing songs the way Rafi sang. They have, of course, been many imitators but none like the original. For Rafi, singing was a passion and something which had to be taken seriously. He started his singing career way back in 1942 and held sway in the film industry till his death in 1980 - 38 years with innumerable variety of songs. As a human being, he was extremely humble and religious and surprisingly so soft spoken, that you had to be very close to him to catch what he was saying - something in stark contrast to his songs and powerful voice. He is the only singer who had the unique distinction of opening out his voice when singing on high scales. Other singers' voices narrow down as they reach high pitches. If you listened to the song "chal ud ja re panchi" both by Rafi and Talat, it will be noticeable.(*) During his long career he sang a vast number of songs for all kinds of characters portrayed on the screen. Be it a hero, a drunkard, a beggar, a comedian etc., Rafi catered to all and did justice to the lyricist, the music director, and to the song itself. Music directors had a choice of many singers but there was always the thought at the back of their minds, that in the event no other male singer could do justice to their song, there was always Mohd. Rafi to sing for them. Even other singers have admitted that to sing a duet with him was extremely taxing. Being trained in classical music, he sang a number of very good classical numbers, both solos as well as duets. He has also sung a song for Kishore Kumar in the film "Ragini". Of all music directors that Rafi sang for, somehow he was never repeated by Anil Biswas. Anil Biswas always claimed that his soft music was not suited for Rafi's loud voice - an argument that can go on forever, but Rafi has sung some very good soft numbers, such as "apni to har aah ik toofan," "jaane kya dhoonti rahti hai," "tumse kahoon ik baat," which is proof enough of the control he had on his voice. It seemed as though he could scale any heights of the pitch. The song from "Mughal-e-Azam" titled "zindabad ai mohabbat" is proof enough. His voice carried expressions and gave the listener an understanding of the scenes and actions without having actually seen the film. For example, in "Barsaat Ki Raat" the song "zindagi bhar nahi" has a poetic line, "surkh aanchal ko dabakar jo nichora usne". And the way Rafi has emphasized the word nichora, you could almost imagine Madhubala wringing her aanchal. Or if you listen to the song from "Baharein Phir Bhi Aayengi," phrased "aap ke haseen rukh pe aaj naya noor hai," you can imagine the detailed facial expressions as expressed in the song. Naushad-Shakeel-Rafi was a team that started off way back in the 1940s and produced hits upon hits till mid 1960s. They seemed to be made for each other and none of the three let the other down. Who can forget songs such as "is duniya mein si dilwalo" (Dillagi), "tasveer banata hoon teri" (Deewana) etc. - To write and record from the 1940s to the 1980s would take up a lot of pages, so I will end this article by listing out various songs that have been my personal favourites for a long time and will remain so.

Zindagi ke safar mein akele the ham - Nartaki - Ravi

Ba hosh-o-hawas mein diwana - Night in London - LP

Mohabbat se dekha khafa ho gaye hain - Bheegi Raat - Roshan

9 Source: MAG (Pakistan)

Raaz-e-dil unse chhupaya na gaya - Apna Banake Dekho - Ravi

Dil mein ek jaan-e-tamanna ne - Benazir - S D Burman

Tu mere saamne hai - Suhagan - Madan Mohan

Pahle mile the sapnon mein aaj saamne - Zindagi - Shankar-Jaikishan

Dil ki tamanna thi masti mein - Gyarah Hazar Ladkiyaan - N Dutta

Gar tum bhula na doge - Yakeen - Shankar-Jaikishan

Masti mein chhed ke tarana koi dil ka - Haqeeqat - Madan Mohan

Mujhe le chalo aaj phir us gali mein - Sharabi - Madan Mohan

Ankhiyan sang ankhiyan laagi aaaj - Bada Admi - Chitragupta

SAaz ho tum awwaz hun mein- Saaz aur Awaaz - Naushad

Maana mere haseen sanam - Adventures of Robin Hood - G S Kohli

Teri zulfen pareshaan - Preet Na Jaane Reet - Kalyanji-Anandji

Paas baitho tabiyat behl jaayegi - Punar Milan - C Arjun

Haaye tabassum tera - Nishan - Usha Khanna

Teri tasveer bhi kuch - Kinare Kinare - Jaidev

Zara sun haseena - Kaun Apna Kaun Paraya - Ravi

Hamne kya pyar kiya - Naag Mohini - Sardar Mallik - (*) For those of you who would like to compare the others singers who have sung the same songs, you can listen to the following separate solos. 1. Tum bin jaoon kahan - Rafi and Kishore [Truly a brave RAFIan!] 2. Chal ud jaa re panchhi - Rafi and Talat 3. Saaranga teri yaad mein - Rafi and Mukesh 4. Tasveer banata hoon teri - Rafi and Habib Wali Mohd. ---------- - bye satish

tum mujhe yun bhulaa na paaoge, haan tum mujhe yun bhula na paaoge

jab kabhi bhi sunoge geet mere, sang sang tum bhi gungunaaoge

RMIM Archive Article "363".

Shahid Rafi on Rafi

Posted by: Anand Tiwari[10]

Author: Afsana Ahmed

Every evening normally when all other kids reluctantly sat by the study table, a seven-year-old kid chose to be different. Enchanted by the soothing music of the Ektara which wafted in the air, and ignoring the regular reprimands of his parents, the young boy religiously followed a fakir to the latter's abode - a huge tree. Observation by the fakir led to a friendship which gradually stimulated the dormant interest of the boy. He picked up the rudiments of music from the fakir as he already had a God-gifted voice. Rafi's first inspiration was the fakir's voice. Years later, the quiet boy grew up to create an irreplaceable mark in the history of music. When late singer Mohammad Rafi decided to become a singer, his father, a village landlord, was dead against the idea, but with the guidance of his elder brother and his own conviction Rafi scaled the heights of stardom after a long struggle. There have been umpteen things written about his works and achievements. However, there are certain unsaid and unspoken memories of the late singer, which son Md Shahid Rafi treasures of his father. Shahid fondly recalls that he was in awe of his famous father. Though he was friendly to a certain extent, the late singer commanded immense respect. "Inspite of his hectic schedule, he always gave us quality time. He was very quiet and possessed a sedate personality. On weekends, he took all of us to our Lonawala bungalow. We enjoyed being together and cherished our relationship. When he was just nine years old, he stared singing in mehfils in his hometown Lahore. Once there was a show in Lahore where the late singer K.L. Saigal was singing. Crowds thronged the place and unfortunately the electricity went off and Saigal saab refused to deliver without the musical bands. That's when dad was asked by the organisers to enthral the crowds. He performed and was spotted by music director Shyam Sunder, who had come with Saigal saab. The lure of the film industry brought daddy to Mumbai where he started by singing in a Punjabi film whose music director was Shyam Sunder. Later, he got a few offers from Hindi films like Gaon Ki Gori and Pehle Aap, but nothing worked for him. Dad even sang in chorus for Naushad uncle. It was sheer luck, which got dad in Naushad uncle's good books and he got two major breakthroughs as Baiju Bawra and Aan. Naushad favoured Rafi over Talat Mehmood. One day Talat saab infuriated Naushad saab by smoking in front of him. The Forties didn't give him opportunity except Naushad saab's Jugnu. It took the entire Fifties to establish himself and gradually his supremacy over his contemporaries. Success never disturbed him. The more he became popular, the more down to earth and accessible he became. He always used to say, "main mohtaaj nahin banna chahta". He pointed upwards and said, "sab khuda ki den hai." 'Commercially dad reached his zenith in the Sixties. His contemporaries, the late Kishore Kumar and Mukesh, were pre-occupied with their acting careers. He became the regular voice of Rajendra Kumar, Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand, Shammi Kapoor and other top actors. Dad was very close to Naushad, but that didn't stop him from giving his best to other music directors. Pointing out good songs from Dad's collection will be a tuff job. Every rendition has its own individual style hummed by all and sundry. Dad's loveable nature got him many friends in the industry, though he was in the peak of his career. I don't want to go in details about daddy's temporary squabble with Lata Mangeshkar, over issues of royalty payment, not that it caused any slump in his career. Everyone knew dad was right, which gave him confidence to deal with the low phases of life. Daddy was never a film buff, but after Deewar, he became a fan of Amitabh Bachchan. I remember when he first got to sing for Amitabh Bachchan, Chal chal mere bhai, tere haath jodta hoon, he was overwhelmed. He came home and like a kid, full of verve and excitement, narrated the entire incident. He was very happy to sing for Amitabh Bachchan. However, in the Seventies, post-Aradhana Kishore Kumar regained his position which became difficult for dad, but he never showed it. Dad never consumed liquor but he accurately rendered the evergreen Choo lene do nazuk hoton ko, in

10Source: Asian Age

his controlled but slurring voice. Though he made a comeback in 1977 with Hum Kissi Se Kum Nahin and Amar Akbar Anthony, daddy was happy with whatever he acquired. Though dad never wanted to become a music director, he however, gave music for a non-filmi album, in someone else's name. It was a major hit with the public, but no one knew that the music was by dad. He never had any personal favourites but Oh duniya ke rakhwalon and Suhaani Raat dhal gayee, were the songs he used to sing in public places and shows. Dad was a very private person His never let out his depressions and frustrations at home. He was always like a calm sea. Dad, when he was still a struggler in Mumbai, married mom when she was just thirteen and was in her Seventh class. Today, mom tells me how she embarrassed and confused she was when she was asked to put mehendi on her hands, when one day she walked in from school. That very day she was married off to daddy. His death left us numbed and shattered. A heart attack, while recording for a Bengali film, snuffed out the genius in 1980. In the morning after the recording, he complained of a minor pain in his chest. Mom was running a high temperature, but mom instinctively sensed something was strong and called all of us. By then his hands had turned blue. With his insistence, he was taken in his own car to the National Hospital. By then we got to know that he had an heart attack. The hospital didn't have a pace-maker, so he was shifted to the Bombay Hospital, which was very closeby. During this shifting, he suffered three major attacks and after sometime he died. Dad never wanted us to join this industry, so he send all seven of us to London. He always wanted us to become big businessmen and we have fulfilled his dream. He always said that if we wanted to become singers, we should be able to excel him in his own field, and right from the beginning he knew that none of us had the potential to excel him. Moreover, he was aware of the dirty politics in the industry. Hence this reluctancy in grooming us as singers. Sad but true, close friends, who frequented Rafi Mansion during dad's heydays, deserted us. However, it does not make any difference to us." Till date, not a single day passes without Mohammad Rafi songs wafting in the air, be it in the local paan shop, in the cab or in the radio. The genius has passed away but his sonorous voice still lingers on and on.

RMIM Archive Article "103".

Prabodhchandra alias 'Manna' Dey

Posted by: apn@cs.buffalo.edu (Ajay P Nerurkar[11])

Author: Ambarish Mishra

------- Half a century ago, Prabodhchandra Dey, fresh from Vidyasagar college in Calcutta, was in two minds about his vocation: whether to master the consummate craftsmanship of the Patiala gharana or sing for films. Father Purnachandra Dey, a chartered accountant, however, wanted his son, a Bachelor of Arts, to be a barrister. Prabodh, like countless bhadraloks of Calacutta, was under the mesmeric spell of his uncle K.C.Dey, well-known actor-singer and popular star of New Theatres. The uncle chose the nephew as his disciple and that has made all the difference to the world of Hindi film music. For over five decades Manna Dey, incidentally, the pet-name Manna was chosen by K.C.Dey, has regaled Hindi film aficionados with his lilting songs that refuse to age with time. Hit numbers such as "Poochho na kaise maine rain beetayee", "Laga chunari mein daag", "Aye meri zohra jabeen", "Na to karavaan ki talaash hai" and "Chunri sambhaal gori" (the last with Lata), to name a few, spin a tale of Indian life. Though his career graph never soared to dizzy heights, Manna Dey doubtless stands apart because of his deep voice and a wide repertoire: from qawwali to light, romantic duets to classical numbers. "All that I have attained in music is because of my uncle's training," says Mannada with a sense of modesty reminiscent of the near-extinct era when blowing one's trumpet was considered blase. Mannada left for Calcutta on Friday to attend a string of shows, as also to celebrate his 75th birthday on May 1 at his ancestral home on Shimla road: a palatial 12-bedroom house which has with- stood the rigours of two centuries with legitimate pride. "Cal- cutta in the 1930s was a dream city," he said last week, unspool- ing memories of the bygone era in the well-appointed music room - with a harmonium on the baithak - at his suburban residence. Mannada grew up to the soft strains of baul songs, Rabin- drasangeet and khayal. He would often escort his uncle - K.C.Dey was blind - to New Theatres' sprawling studio on Prince Anwar Shah road. "It was like my second home," he said and recalled with gratitude how he got to see from close quarters stalwarts such as K.L.Saigal, Kanan Devi, Prithviraj Kapoor, Pahari Sanyal, Jamuna, Raichand Boral, Pankaj Mullick, Nitin Bose and Timir Baran to name a few. "The entire New Theatres unit was like an extended family," he added. Such was the warmth and bonhomie in the studio that the head cook would even rustle up the favourite dishes of Mannada. Back home, K.C.Dey would put his nephew through the paces, ac- quainting him with the subtleties of tappa, thumri, bhajan and qawwali. Apart from honing his disciple's vocal skills, he also taught him languages, literature and poetry. "I am appalled when singers or actors don't get their pronunciations right," Mannada nodded in despair. With the disintegration of New Theatres in the early 1940s, ac- tors, singers and technicians made a beeline to Bombay in search of fresh pastures. Producer Chimanlal Trivedi of Bombay's Lakshmi film company specially came down to Calcutta to goad K.C.Dey into coming to Bombay. Phani Muzumdar led the exodus comprising Dey Sr, recordist Robin Chatterjee and technicians Prafulla Roy and Vibhuti Laha. Mannada joined the group which arrived in Bombay in December 1942. In Bombay, Mannada started off as assistant to music director H.P.Das. However, it was, again, K.C.Dey's intervention that flagged off his career as playback singer. Vijay Bhatt of Prakash Pictures wanted K.C.Dey to record a song for Ram-Rajya, Bhatt's ambitious venture. The elder Dey flatly refused, but, instead, proposed his nephew's name. Music director Shankarrao Vyas was sceptical. However, Mannada's stentorian voice which sounded very similar to his mentor's voice, delighted Vyas. After a few rehearsals the 24-year-old crooner was in the recording studio belting out a solemn number for the character of Valmiki, the wizened sage. "Pahala gaaan buddhe ke liye gaana pada" (My first song was for an old man), Mannada laughed, adding that the song fetched him a princely fee of Rs.150. Years of struggle followed, at times compelling the talented singer to wonder if he was on the right track. "I even thought of going back to

11Source: Times of India

Calcutta and doing my law," he added. However, "Upar gagan vishaal" the marching song from Mashaal, which Manna- da sang with great gusto, turned into a super hit. "I decided to stay on in Bombay," he averred. Soon, a string of super hit numbers brought instant fame. Songs such as "Yeh raat bheegi bheegi" and "Aaja sanam madhur chandani mein hum" (both with Lata Mangeshkar), "Aye mere pyaare watan", "Dil kaa haal sune dilwala" and "Mud mud ke naa dekh, mud mudke", "Tu hai mera prem devata" (with Mohammed Rafi), "Sur na saje kyaa gaoon main" and the unforgettable prayer song, "Tu pyaar ka sagar hai" have accorded an exalted status to Manna Dey in the pantheon of playback singers. He bought his first car, a Hillman-Minx, in 1955. "I still remember the car number: BYH 2329." If melody was the leitmotif of the golden era of Hindi film music, it was, Mannada strongly felt, the result of the collec- tive effort of music directors, lyricists and playback singers. "Music directors were taskmasters. They had, as they say, an ear for music. Every word, every note was chiselled and honed. Manna- da mentions R.D.Burman as a case in point. Mannada's song "Aao twist kare" from Mehmood's Bhoot Bangla was a lift from "Come let us twist". Before recording the Hindi number, Pancham sang the original English song in such great style that Mannada, the recordist and the musicians were breathless. "We all - Lata, Rafi, Geeta Dutt, Kishore, Mukesh, Asha, myself - took great pains to convey the subtleties contained in a song. Which is why every song of the '50s and the '60s is still a delight." With Shankar (as in Shankar-Jaikishan) Mannada had a special bond of affection and friendship. He cherishes his long meetings with Shankar in the latter's spacious music room at the Famous Labora- tory in Mahalakshmi. "I would sing for him for hours: baul songs or tappa or a thumri." Mannada won his Filmfare award for "Ae bhai zara dekh ke chalo", the toe-tapping number, a Shankar com- position, from Raj Kapoor's Mera Naam Joker. Mannada notes with pride that he has sung for almost every com- poser, ranging from Anil Biswas to R.D.Burman. "But I was never in the top slot and, honestly, I never aspired to be in that race," he admitted. Steeped in the fine tradition of New Theatres, Mannada's gentle low-key approach hardly matched the petti- ness and pomp of the filmdom. There were some unhappy moments too. Sometimes a star or a film-maker would openly object to Mannada's presence in the recording studio. "Why is he singing this song ?" they would ask the music director. Even in his home-state Bengal, recognition came a bit late: in mid-1960s. "There was near chaos in Tollygunge when news spread that I was to sing for Uttam Kumar," he laughed. However, in the later years, Mannada carved a niche in Bengali cinema. Insiders claim that film distributors in West Bengal insist that the film should have at least one sung by Manna Dey. Belated recognition or the low trajectory of his career graph hardly bother Mannada. "I have no regrets, no complaints," he as- serts. Stubbornly unwilling to croon vulgar ditties to the accom- paniment of an unwieldy orchestra, the veteran chooses to spend time in his music room for rigorous riyaaz the legacy of K.C.Dey and New Theatres.

RMIM Archive Article "136".

Manna Dey

Posted by: Satish Subramanian[12] (subraman@cs.umn.edu) Part 1

pradeep@watson.ibm.com (Pradeep Dubey) - Part 2

Part 1

In Bombay, Mannada started off as assistant to music director H.P.Das. Manna did a lot of music direction earlier in his career. He was almost exactly following his uncle K.C.Dey's footsteps, who was a pioneer in Hindi film music direction (in early 30s when talkies started). Some of the music that Manna gave were with other well known MDs. He is credited along with H.P.Das for Dev Anand's "Hum Bhi Insaan Hain" (1948). With Khemchand Prakash he gave "Jaan Pehchan" (1950), "Shree Ganesh Janma" (1951), and "Tamasha" (1952). And with Vyas he had "Maha Puja" (1954). "I even thought of going back to Calcutta and doing my law," he > added. However,"Upar gagan vishaal" the marching song from Mashaal, > which Manna-da sang with great gusto, turned into a super hit. The above song, mentioned in the article, from "Mashaal" was probably Manna Dey's own. He is credited for the music of "Mashaal" (1950) along with S.D.Burman. Manna Dey alone had a handful of movies as a MD. Chamkee (52), Naina (53), Shuk Rambha (53), Shiv Kanya (54), Jai Mahadev (55), Gauri Puja (56), and Naag Champa (58) were some of them. These are obviously not as famous as, say Hemant Kumar's compositions. (also did some music in 70s: Sonal (1973)) So in 40s he spent mostly learning, 50s making music, and in 60s mainly singing. In the 60s the MDs who gave him great songs were mostly Roshan ('ishq ishq ishq' (Barsaat Ki Raat), 'laaga chunri mein daag' (Dil hi to hai), S.D.Burman ('tere naina taalash' (Talash),'poochho na kaise maine' (Meri Surat Teri Ankhen), SJ ('chalat musaafir' (Teesri Kasam), 'dil ka haal sune dil waala' (Shree 420)) and Salil ('jaane waale sipahi se poochu' (Usne Kaha Tha), 'zindagi kaise hain paheli (Anand), 'ae mere pyare watan' (Kabuliwala).) During the recording of the song from "Kabuliwaala", 'ae mere pyaare watan', Manna started singing the song in a very low voice and producing a hollow effect in his voice; esp. in the lines "tuu hii merii aarazuu, tuu hii merii aabaruu". Salil immediate- ly stopped recording and asked him "What happened to your voice? If you are not well we can record later." But Manna convinced Salil that this song needs to be recorded that way. Salil agreed. That rendering went very well with the desert scene pic- turization and the mood of the song in the film. And this song was rated on RMIM to be a very difficult number to vocally repro- duce because of the emotion-filled rendering by Manna Dey. Salil took Manna Dey to Malayalam films as well. And Manna's "Chemmeen" songs are still as popular as some of Yesudas's songs in Malayalam films. > Mannada won his Filmfare award for "Ae bhai zara dekh ke chalo", the > toe-tapping number, a Shankar composition, from Raj Kapoor's Mera > Naam Joker. Manna used to wonder why he didn't get awards for the songs he put in a lot of effort. He used to ask people what it takes to get one? Finally he got one for "Dil Hi To Hai". Yup, the same one which could 'win you inter-college singing contests' - Roshan's "laaga chunri mein daag". But as it was a semi-classical number Manna didn't quite like the idea of getting the award for this song. He felt he will be slotted as a classical singer. Also he felt he had put in many more greater efforts before this particular song. He didn't get that many offers as many of his contemporaries. So when after a long time he was called by Raj Kapoor to sing for his "Mera Naam Joker", he was thrilled! But that was short- lived. When he saw he was going to sing "ai bhai zara dekh ke chalo" he felt dejected. He thought it was a weird song. He said in an interview, "What kind of a song was it - 'aage hi nahin, peechche bhi, baayen bhi, baayen bhi nahin daayen bhi'? and it didn't stop there, it went on 'upar hi nahi, neeche bhi'!" But he went ahead and recorded that half-heartedly. Imagine his surprise and amusement when landed up with a Filmfare award for that! When he thought he deserved awards he didn't get them, but he got them when he least expected or bothered. It is not

12Source: Compiled from some posts on RMIM

that he was dying to get an award, but the appreciation, or lack of it, for his efforts did affect the artist in him. > Belated recognition or the low trajectory of his career graph > hardly bother Mannada. "I have no regrets, no complaints," he as- > serts. But he hated being slotted as a classical and semi-classical singer. He didn't even consider the songs that he sung as "semi-classical", he preferred to call them "half classical", be- cause, he said, the tunes for those songs usually start-off as normal song and then suddenly they go into "sa re ga ma"s (what does one call these?). Infact in most of the cases Manna used to reduce the length of these "sa re ga"s during recording than what the MDs expected him to sing. Probably it was because of his disgust at the 'misuse' of classical music. If you consider his singing, he was the only match for Rafi in all those memorable qawaalis. Many have sung qawaalis with Rafi but none of them could give Rafi the kind of 'competition' that Manna gave, which brought out the best in both of them. Take for in- stance the qawaali that was discussed on RMIM - "waaqif hoon khoob ishq ke tarz-e-bayaan se main". This is a treat to the listeners, with Rafi and Manna trying to get a step ahead of each other. The words Roshan-Manna-Rafi-Sahir can intoxicate any music fan! Manna was overrated, rightly so, but under-used. He was called when songs were required for elder actors (Ashok Kumar, Balraj Sahni), or for background songs, or for classical/difficult numbers. Every other singer had films in which they sang almost all the songs, but in the case of Manna that was something very rare. Talat, Hemant, even Mahendra Kapoor had atleast one com- plete film to their credit, but not Manna.

Part 2

Just my 2 cents on Manna Dey's 75th anniversary. Doordarshan (last Thu) had a special hour-long documentary on Manna Dey. Here are some pieces that I can recall: a) It seems when RDB first proposed the "paDosan" song (ek chatur naar) to Manna Dey, and told him he would be losing to Kishore in a some convincing and he reluctantly agreed but after hearing Kishore sing, Manna Dey had no regrets and had all praise for KK. b) Manna Dey went on to add how the opposite happened and in "Basant Bahar" he was to win a classical competetion against Bhimsen Joshi (?). He added the BhimsenJi was forced to under- perform to make him win. c) Shammi K mentioned how once it was suddenly decided that a song was needed in one of his movies (I forget the name). For some reason, they needed to get the song done in couple of days, and Shankar J (?) suggested contacting Manna D. They got togeth- er with lyricist (Hasart J ?) and the song was completed in time to their surprise: meri bhains ko dandaa kyun maara ... d) The documentary had a very nice Manna D song from Rajashree pictures' Saudagar (Amitabh-Nutan), and the end Manna D mentioned he still regularly sings and was seen singing this song with tears flowing down his cheeks !! e) His wife was also interviewed, who is a Keralite (Sulochana Dey). Pradeep ----------

RMIM Archive Article "246".

Manna Magic

Author: Daya Kishan Thussu[13]

Returning home after a heavy week at the university, ploughing through the mail - much of it junk and a nasty note from my bank, charging me a hideous amount for exceeding my overdraft - I came across a shoddily printed information sheet with a rather faded picture of Manna Dey. Lo and behold, one of my favourite singer was performing in Britain. I leapt to the phone and booked a place. A very Bengali voice at the other end said she would keep a seat for me. All Saturday, I listened to Manna Dey tapes, from golden oldies from the films to Harivanshrai Bachchan's delightful Madhushala. As the evening approached I set off to savour the beauty of Manna Dey's voice. The hall was full of gorgeously dressed up women of Indian origin. A flavour of India was in the air - samosas and tea were being served by well-dressed middle class Gujarati doctors. A cluster of Bengali bhadraloks were involved in an animated conversation about liberalisation of Indian economy while a sprinkling of ever-present and lively sardarjis were bringing the much-needed laughter to the grey evening! As the old man - he is 76 - came onto the tastefully decorated dais, the crowd gave him a warm welcome. He opened the evening with that gem of a song, 'Bhai ray...neela amber muskai,' from that gem of a film, Bimal Roy's Do Bigha Zameen. As he started he told his audience how much he respected the words of Shailendra, the music of Salil Chowdhary. One after the other - from great film songs - 'Pyar huwa ekrar huwa' - to beautiful ghazals - 'Meri bhee ek Mumtaz thee' - Manna Dey delighted his audience. The virtuosity of his talent was manifest from the fact that as well as in Hindi he sang in Bengali, Gujarati and Malyalam. Although the crowd was predominantly Gujarati, Manna Dey said that to appreciate a song one does not need a language - music has its own vocabulary. But it was indicative of how non-resident Indians feel that they appeared to clap harder when the song was in their own language rather than Hindi. The problem with Hindi - despite vigorous claims of its hegemony by many other Indians - especially in Tamilnadu, is that it does not have a clear cut constituency or identity which, for example, Bengali has. Yet it is Hindi, or more accurately, Hindustani which is spoken by the widest section of Indians. The Indian film industry - and here I mean the mainstream Bombay-based film industry which rather tediously is called Bollywood- is at the forefront of this linguistic evolution. (I resent the Bollywood label - the implication of this is that we cannot produce anything which is our own. Everything has to come from Hollywood, the bastion of global popular culture.) With all its faults - and they are many - the Hindi film industry has contributed to creating a sense of Indian identity. This identity may often clash with a cluster of regional, linguistic, religious or ethnic identities. Yet people like Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammed Rafi and Manna Dey have done more to popularise and sustain an Indian lingua franca than all the government policies and learned volumes on national integration. Despite its poverty, India was one of the first countries in the so-called Third World to have a indigenous film industry. Our films were very Indian, much of the music drew its inspiration from the rich tapestry of folk and classical tradition, the songs were drawn from a very highly developed culture of verse composition. I might be wrong, but it is hard to name a single American songwriter even remotely as sophisticated and profound in ideas as our very own Shailendra, Sahir, Majrooh and Kaifi. Indian films are widely viewed - shown in over 100 countries - in Africa, Asia, the Arab world, Europe and North America, by Indian diaspora and other audiences. But although India produces more feature films than the US, in export terms the Hollywood films earn nearly 750 times the revenue that India earns from film exports. The UK, the Gulf states and the US are the three largest export markets for Indian films. The demand is particularly strong in the US, home to many Indian professionals who miss a Hindi tearjerker movie or a Shankar-Jaikishan melody. As Manna Dey took a break, I went backstage to congratulate him profusely for his

---

13Source: India Connect webpages

remarkable energy. I could not resist him asking why is that we do not seem to produce good popular music anymore. Why is that the lyrics are becoming increasingly banal and progressively vulgar? What has happened to the simple brilliance of the words of Shailendra - 'Ye gori nadiyon ka chalna uchchal kar, ke jaise alhad chale pea se mil kar!' He held my hand and said with a deep voice that these were creations of great minds and would pass the test of time. Indeed as all great poetry - from Shakespeare to Goethe, from Kalidas to Ghalib, the Hindi film songs too will survive. The only danger is that the increasing commercialisation of popular culture may work against development of decent, worthy poetry and music which will last after the composer is no more. The signs of this trend are already there. How many film songs today last for more than a couple of weeks, or at best, months? Who must get the blame? The government which has left the domain of popular culture in the hands of corporate sharks? The MTVs of the world? Or our urban youth culture which thrives on cheap imitation of American popular culture? What are we left with if our language, our cultural ethos, our music and poetry become foreign? Culture is one of the few things we can call our own. In this age of globalisation, cultural identities are being swept away by an avalanche of mediated images. Who will resist it and how? I was reflecting on these thoughts as Manna Dey got back into action with that immortal song from that immortal film - Teesri Kasam - "Chalat musafir moha liyo re." And the whole hall - full of people, many of whom have never visited India, who speak Bengali, Punjabi, Malyalam, Gujarati or Tamil, burst into a frenzy of clapping a Bhojpuri song! And I thought culture is far too powerful to be destroyed by the banalities of Western television and wherever Indians live, they will always be Bharatwasis! ----------

RMIM Archive Article "351".

RMIM's Manna Dey interview

Posted by: Chandrashekhar shekhar[14]@emirates.net.ae

Author: Chandrashekhar shekhar@emirates.net.ae

Hi, RMIMers It was an exhilarating experience meeting Manna Dey - it always is. I had done one earlier interview for a local newspaper (here in Dubai), but at least a third of its actual length never got into print, so outspoken is the man in his off-the-record comments. This one was no different, but I've tried to cover all the questions RMIMers sent me. Please note, comments within asterisks are my own, not part of the interview. *This first lot of questions were posed by Satish Subramaniam* Q : Your uncle K.C. Dey was undoubtedly a major influence on your singing career. Has K.C. Dey given music to any Hindi films? A : Yes, he did. Now let me see. There was "Aandhi", "Tamanna" and "Justice". (*In an aside I must mention here that "Tamanna" (1942) marked Manna's debut song, a duet with Suraiya - then Baby Suraiya - called "Jaago aai usha, panchi bole jaago" I read a post by Ashok quoting Manna as being unable to remember the exact title of his first song, but this little factoid was told to me by Manna Dey himself on an earler visit to Dubai*) Q : Was S.D. Burman working under K.C. Dey or learning from K.C. Dey? A : Burman and uncle never worked together although Burman was learning music from him. Q : What about your own association with S.D. Burman? Did you work under him as assistant music director? A : That I did, in several films. For "Mashaal" the producer asked me (prompted by Burman) to compose some songs, and so I was credited as associate music director. Q : A reader wonders why the song "saanjh dhali dil ki lagi" from "Kaala Pani" was assigned to you by S.D. Burman, rather than to Rafi, who sang all the other songs. Any reason for this? A : That kind of decision is generally taken by the music director. Although I can't recall why that happened in "Kaala Pani", Dev Anand certainly objected to my voice being used for the title 'qawwali' song from "Chhupa Rustom" years later. Burmanda stood firm, but I still wonder why Dev made a fuss. After all, he was not born a Dev Anand, just a normal human being. Although (*eyes twinkling*) I'm not so sure now. Q : You sang many of R.D. Burman's early songs. What was your impression of him? How long did you know him? A : I knew him from the day he was born. He was definitely one of the most creative and innovative of our music directors. My first song for him was "Allah jaane main hoon kaun, kya hai mera naam" from "Pati Patni". The combination of R.D, Mehmood, and myself was particularly good, because we had such fun in the recording room. I did whatever vocal gags I thought were appropriate, and sometimes the three of us would just fall down laughing. But underneath all the playfulness Pancham was a serious and dedicated music director. Did you know he was well trained in classical music? Q : I've read that he was. Tell me, have you given music for any Bengali films? A : Oh, many. Offhand I can think of "Ram Dhakka", "Babu Moshai"... there are others. Q : The reader, Mr. Satish, now wants to know if you can add to this list of films for which you were music director or assistant: Hum Bhi Insaan Hai (1948, with H.P. Das) Jaan Pehchan (1950, with Khemchand Prakash), Mashaal (1950, with S.D. Burman), Shree Ganesh Janma (1951, with Khemchand Prakash), Chamkee, and Tamasha (1952, with Khemchand Prakash), Naina and Shuk Rambha (1953, with Khemchand Prakash), Maha Puja (1954, with Shankar Rao Vyas and Bharat Vyas), Jai Mahadev (1955), Gauri Puja (1956) Naag Champa (1959) and Sonal (1973). Were there others? A : Goodness, that seems to be a complete list! Who are the people asking these questions? Q : (*At this point I had to break to explain what a newsgroup was, and the die-hard music buffs that constitute RMIM*) A : I can think of a film called "Kadambari" and another, "Sati Toral", both in the '40s with Hari Prasanna Das. Q : You sang "Maanase maine varoo" in the Malayalam film 'Chemmeen', for Salil Choudhury. The beginning of the tune appears similar to "Seema"'s "Tu pyar ka saagar hai". Was there any connection? A : (*Tilts head back, eyes closed, and hums 'Maanase maine varoo'*) No, I think it was just a coincidence. *This next lot of questions came

14Source: interview with Manna

from Prince Kohli* Q : Who in your opinion was the music director most fun to work with? A : As I've already said, R.D. Burman. Q : The most capable? A : It depends on what you mean by capable. Q : I suppose it refers to a music director who was thoroughly able to give the film's director exactly what he wanted, in terms of the song situation in the film. A : That would be Shankar-Jaikishan. There were absolute masters in delivering the goods exactly the way the director wanted. Q : And the strictest? A : C. Ramachandra. C.Ramachandra and Naushad are both hard taskmasters and knew how to extract work from a singer, and there was no fooling around with them. (*Another aside. In a previous meeting I had asked Manna Dey why although both he and Naushad were inclined towards classical music, there had been hardly any collaboration bet- ween them I could only think of "Dukh bhare din" from "Mother India", and a duet with Rafi in "Palki". He seemed reluctant to discuss it, but told me that even though sound recordist Minoo Katrak had strongly recommended him to Naushad, the maestro preferred Rafi over Manna for his compositions, for whatever reason. Still, Manna holds Naushad in great esteem as one of our supreme music directors*) *This question from Chetan Vinchhi* Q: In songs based on classical music which require a singer to perform a few complicated phrases or taans, typically what fraction of these in pre-composed? How much is the singer allowed to do impromptu? Is the singer asked to emulate classical artists or styles? What happens if the artist is not familiar with the raag? A: There is always scope for improvisation, and a good music director will always be receptive to suggestions. I can confidently say that in all my songs, my own contribution has been at least 25%. Yes, we were asked occasionally to imitate the styles of great classical singers, but I've never done it. Q : Does this mean that the taans at the end of "Laaga chunri mein daag" or "Phulgendwa na maaro" were yours? A : That's Roshan! No, never with the likes of Roshan or Naushad. For those two songs Roshan had the whole thing down pat and I just did what I was told. What a composer! The question of improvising on such a masterwork never even arose. *Gautam Choudhury asks this question* Q : In India famous playback singers continue to sing past their ability to sing properly or correctly. A good example was Hemant. Towards his last days he could never say 'No' and the results were terrible. And now it's happening with Lata. Would you stop when you think you're unable to perform the way you did, or continue, saying 'My fans want me to sing'? A : I have completely stopped singing for Hindi films, but it's not because of any inability. I think I'm in good voice, and my riyaz keeps me in tune for my stage programmes. I just don't fit in with the present crop of music directors. But if I were to be approached with a good song, meant for filming on a character-actor, then per- haps I would still consider it. *By now Mannada was a little tired, so I decided to slip in just one question of my own* Q : You sang 'Ketaki gulab juhi champak', with Bimsen Joshi, in 'Basant Bahar'. What was the experience like? A : Haven't I told you that story? It's interesting. At first the film's hero Bharat Bhooshan didn't want my voice. After the success of 'Baiju Bawra' Rafi was understandably his first choice. But Shankar, ever my supporter, prevailed upon him, and some tact was called for since Bhooshan's brother was the film's producer. The first song recorded was 'Sur na saje', and that won Bharat Bhooshan over completely. Next came 'Nain mile chain kahan'. Then Shankar called up and said, "I need you for a duet. The film's situation calls for the hero to sing with a music ustad, and defeats the ustad in the process". I said "Sure. When do we do it?", confident that my co-singer would be Rafi or another playback singer. "Well, we're trying to get either Pt. Bhimsen Joshi or Ustad Aamir Khan for the ustad's voise", Shankar said. (*Eyes wide open, thunderstruck*) My heart sank. ME? Sing with Bhimsen Joshi? And 'defeat' him in a duet? I tried at once to get out of it. "Why don't you get two classical singers for the duet", I asked him. Shankar's firmness could cut both ways - he lost no time in pointing out that after two songs had already been recorded, I was now the established voice of the hero, and who was going to explain to Bharat Bhooshan why another voice was now being used? I went home depressed, and told my wife, "Pack! We leave Bombay tonight and return only after six weeks". When I told her why, she chided me and said "Shame on you! It is after all, a playback song". After much arguing and convincing I finally decided to take it up as a challenge. I made Shankar give me the song a full four weeks in advance. We has two rehearsals, and Bhimsen Joshi's voice was incredible. Standing next to him in the recording booth was an experience. But then I was also appeciated, especially for my 'entry' in the song, with an alaap in a single long breath. ----------

That was it. Manna Dey had spoken for almost two hours, and I hope I've covered most of the ground based on the questions sent to me. Sadly, some more questions arrived too late, but since Mannada is expected again in Dubai on a private visit next month, I'll try and get those answered too, and post them later, along with his 'ten best', which he told me about two years ago. I asked him whether he ever considered writing his autobiography, or at least a memoir, but he said that would open up a whole Pandora's box. Anyway, I trust you all enjoyed the interview. Regards, Shekhar.

RMIM Archive Article "352".

Manna Dey

Posted by: Arvind Agarwalla[15] (arvind@fact.com.sg)

Author: Afsana Ahmed

--------- Fortunately Manna Dey belonged to an era when cinema meant pure entertainment and melody was queen. Unfortunately, he also belonged to the era when Dev Anand, Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor dominated the screen and Mohammed Rafi, Mukesh and later Kishore Kumar were identified as the voices of the trio. There was no room left at the top for this equally talented singer. But the humble singing master has no complaint against the film industry even though it forgot to give him his due. Manna Dey was blessed with a voice that could carry off any time, but fortune failed to come to his aid. People wondered why. Was it because he lacked that killer instinct? The singer agrees. "Had it not been for my wife Sulochanna. I would have packed my bags and left for Calcutta long ago. She has been a major source of moral strength for me ever since we met." The sonorous sweep of Manna Dey's voice still haunts music lovers. No compilation of songs from golden era of film music is complete without his voice. His songs are still popular, but the singer is relegated to an archaic cupboard with only his memories and his music. Though Manna Dey is slotted in the semi classical mould, his capacity to widen his range from the deep Ae mere watan or Kasme vade pyar wafa sab upkaar to open renderings like Laaga chunri me daag, Tu pyaar ka sagar hai and Ao twist kare established his as a playback singer in every sense of the word. However he was best appreciated for romantic songs like yeh raat bhigi bhigi, Dil ki girah khol do chup na, Aaja sanam madhur chandni mein hum, which are still hummed by young and old alike. When he lent his voice to Raj Kapoor in the evergreen rain song , pyaar hua ikraar hua, a nation led its breath in fascination. Tucked away in a corner of Juhu, Manna Dey's old bungalow stand tall. Like him, it is seasoned and timeless. Sitting in his music room, the 78 year old singer walks down memory lane. Born in Calcutta to a family that was musically inclined (his uncle was K.C.Dey, the singer), melody came naturally to him. " Since Uncle was a musician, the best of Ustaads frequented our home and I gradually learned and understood it, he recalls . "But I never dreamed of making it my profession." After a brief stint with Calcutta's famous new Theatre, he left home to seek his fortune in Mumbai with his uncle K.C. Dey. "I had to accompany him as he was blind. We stayed in Shivaji Park, Dadar. I found a guide and mentor in my uncle who showed me how to make my voice presentable and appealing." His break in the industry came when filmmaker Vijay Bhatt asked K.C. Dey to sing for his film. "Uncle refused to lend his voice for some other artist because he sang only when he acted. He suggested me instead," says Dey. "Bhatt was apprehensive as the character of Balmiki required an open-throated voice, like that of an old man. And I was barely 22 then. But he asked me to go to the studio and take a test. I sang a few songs in Hindi and Marathi and was selected to sing playback inn the film Ram Rajya." Playback singers' names never appeared on the credits in those days, but the film was a hit and people took notice of Dey. However, this film slotted him as a singer in mythological films and much against his will he was flooded with similar offers. I was frustrated and wanted to go back to Calcutta, as I had to sing play back for old people at such a tender age, he says. For instance, I sang for a film called Pareenita. I was very happy and gave it my best as it had some big names and was not the usual mythological film. When I saw the film, I was shattered to find that my voice was again used for an old beggar. The industry stamp you once you start with something and if it is big. I was not satisfied with what I was doing, though the feedback was good. Fortunately he stayed in Mumbai and soon producers were turning to Manna Dey to do difficult or semi-classical music made him the right choice. " I never claimed to be a classical singer though I enjoy singing," says Dey. "And I wanted to sing for the heroes. But at times I seriously thought of switching to classical singing as I wasn't given pride of place in the mainstream genre." Dejected though he was however, he started

15Source: Asian Age, Apr 23, 1998

assisting Khemchand Prakash, Anil Biswas and finally S.D. Burman. It was then that he got the opportunity to sing Oopar gagan vishaal from the film Mashal which actually established him as a playback singer in the true sense. Still he wasn't very happy. " I started to sing through provoking, philosophical songs, but it didn't satisfy me," he says. "The fact that with a voice like mine, I was still not considered good enough to sing playback for heroes kept eating me from inside." Raj Kapoor was a good friend of his. Recalling their growing association he says, "Once I was reahearsing in a studio and Raj was shooting. He heard me and barged into the room. I was singing a malhar song. After listening to it he urged me to join them downstairs." This resulted in Dey penning Lapak Jhapak Ke tu aa re badariya which went to become one of the biggest hits ever from the film Boot Polish. His association with Raj Kapoor grew and he sang some of the best songs of his career for the RK camp. Manna Dey's professional lifehas been full of contradictions. But the singer remains unfazed. " My progress was slow but definite." He says. He recalls a bitter-sweet anecdote that was pivotal in building up his career.

"I was slotted as a semi classical singer. Once I got an offer to sing a

classical number for Basant Bahar. As usual I accepted without fuss. Later they told me that it would be a competition with Bhimsen Joshi, and I went blank. I knew I could effortlessly sing classical songs but how could I compete with Joshi and defeat him? I went home quietely and suggested to my wife that we disappear for 15 days, and come back only when the recordings are over. She was very angry. I don't know what she injected in me and I religiously went there the next day and sat for the recording without fear." He remembers another humiliating incident which he feels determined his need to Make it big. "It happened during the recording of AVM production's Chori Chori. Shankar (of Shankar-Jaikishan fame) wanted Lata and me to sing the song Yeh raat bhigi bhigi. As per schedule, all of us were rehearsing in the now famous studio. Suddenly the producer of the film, Mr Shetty dropped in and enquired about Mukesh (ahot name in those days) as he thought Mukesh was singing. Shankar introduced me, but to my humiliation, he ignored me completely and insisted on Mukesh and finally cancelled the recording." "Raj Kapoor who was also there took the situation in hand. After much convincing, Shetty agreed. But by then I lost my mood. I was heartbroken. Lata and Shankar brought back my confidence and swallowing the humiliation. I sang the song and was appreciated by Shetty, who later apologised. It was thanks to Raj that I have this beautiful song in my career." In a career spanning more than two decades, he sang 2,500 songs. Manna Dey drew most of his inspiration from western singers, including Frank Sinatra and Perry Como. "But my greatest strength and inspiration remains my wife," he says. A new breed of singers took over from where Kishore, Mukesh and Rafi left off, leaving Manna Dey in the shadows. Years of public neglect and the sorrow of knowing that he has not got his due. Don't make him bitter. He is happy.

RMIM Archive Article "268".

Talat Mahmood -Velvet Voice

Author: Lata Khubchandani[16]

---------- Like many others before him, Talat Mahmood had come to the film industry to act. And has acted in as many as 13 films. But for- tunately for thousands of music lovers, his aspirations met with a moderate success. Had it not been so the music world would've been the poorer. To speak about an artiste who has always chosen to remain low profile is as delicate as it is difficult. Yet one cannot deny that it a labour of love. One hopes to do justice to this man who has lived in the midst of the ludest arena - the film industry - with the unassumingness of the innately cultured, almost never talking about himself. That he was received less than his due from the film industry, can be chalked up as one black mark for the industry to which he brought a rare grace that no one has equalled. For his is a voice that comes once in a lifetime. Talat Mahmood: soft spoken, mellow-voiced... walked into the hearts of music lovers in the early '40s and remained to stay. The intensity of expression he could infuse into his voice made him the king of ghazal singers. He sang at a time when lyrics were unsurpassed in their beauty written by poets like Ghalib, and and newer aspirants like Shakeel Badayuni, Majrooh Sultanpuri and Sahir Ludhianvi. This, combined with a voice so distinctly different, made a combination almost magical. Though a ghazal singer par excellence he could sing a wide variety of songs with ease as is evident from the melodies he ahs rendered for the silver screen. The film Footpath has gone down in the history of Indian cienema for the song Sham-e-gham ki kasam, aaj gamgin hai hum. It esta- blished the Talat-Dilip Kumar combine. Talat Mahmood's quiet voice suited Dilip Kumar's penchant for subtlety and the two gave some unforgettable numbers to the world of film music. Yeh hawa yeh raat yeh chandni from Sangdil, Ek main hoon ek meri bekasi ki shaam hai from Taraana, Aye mere dil kahin aur chal from Daag, Aye dil mujhe aisi jagah le chal from Arzoo and the lighthearted Husnwalon ko na dil do yeh mitaa dete hain from Babul. As if this isn't enough, we saw this debonair-yet-gracious man as an actor too, when he sang for himself. The most popular amoung these is the duet he sang with Asha Bhosle Pyar par bas to nahin hai from Sone ki Chidiya. Raj Kapoor's Boot Polish with its variety of singers in a singer of moods had Talat with Asha again in the romantic duet Chali kaunse desh with Lata Mangeshkar he gave us Aha, rimjhim ke yeh pyare pyare geet liye from Usne Kaha Tha and Itna na mujhse tu pyar badha from Chhaya. Mahmood sang for Sunil Dutt in a number of films but the highlight of this alliance will remain the utterly soul searing Jalte hain jiske liye from Sujata. Unfortunately, the available recordings of this fabulous number has some of the most beautiful lines cut off Dard banke jo mere dil mein raha dhal na sakaa jadoo banke teri aan- khon mein rukaa chhal na sakaa. He remains only singer who, despite his popular standing in films, has a large collection of non-film ghazals and geets which are equally, if not more, popular than the numbers he sang for films. Talat Mahmood had trained in the famous Morris college of Music in Lucknow. He started broadcasting from All India Radio in 1939 and made his first record in 1941 for HMV in Calcutta - where he also sang and did cameos in films. In 1949 he shifted to Mumbai and remained here. There was something about him that carried sad numbers more hap- pily. Some of these are Ai andalib-e-zaar jaane ko hai bahar, Mera pyar mujhe lauta do, Koi din gar zindagani aur hai, Bekaif dil hai aur jiye ja raha hoon main and the memorable Tasveer teri dil mera behla na sakegi. These are some of his private record- ings and are so popular that even the generation which did not hear him in his heyday is familiar with these numbers. His film ghazals include Wahshat hi sahi and Phir mujhe deeda-e- tar yaad aaya from Mirza Ghalib. And melodious complaint from Parchhain Mohabbat hi na jo samjhe woh zaalim pyar kya jaane. Every song he rendered for films rises above the trite with the polish of his voice: Humse aaya na gayaa from Dekh Kabira Roya, Main pagal mera manva pagal and Mera karar leja from Aashiana and the number from Devdas that

16Source: Indiaxs (http://www.indiaxs.com)

has the power to evoke utter grief Mitva laagi yeh kaisi unbujh pyaas. Only Mahmood could portray Devdas's pain he so completely. As one listens to his voice singing Dekhli teri khudayi bas mera dil bhar gaya , one wonders at the ways of this world that gives adulation to the deceased, when living legends such as Talat Mahmood are not acknowledged, in spite of the fact that he belongs to the era of the unforgettables - both as an actor and a singer. Lata Khubchandani ----------

RMIM Archive Article "269".

Talat Mahmood - voice from the past

Author: V Gangadhar[17]

-------- Not many Talat Mahmood fans with associate him with acting. After all, the mellow voice which rendered golden classics like Jalte hain jiske liye, Tasveer banata hoon tasveer nahin banti, had earned him repute as a singer. But the incomparable Nutan always referred to Seema and Sone Ki Chidiya as her most memorable films. Both films starred Balraj Sahni and Talat Mahmood. Besides, at a Suraiya retrospective in Bombay in 1994, a much-acclaimed film was the late Sohrab Modi's Waris. This film, too, starred Talat Mahmood. "I filled a necessary void in those days," says the soft-spoken hero of 14 films. "I was a singing hero." There were other luminaries of Hindi cinedom who had also filled that slot. Prom- inent among whom was that great singer Kundan Lal Saigal, oft- remembered for his tragic rendering of the role of Devdas. The incomparable Kishore Kumar is remembered for his various comic roles. Why, even the soulful Mukesh tried his hand in acting in an eminently forgettable home production. Of course, these singers were promoted and sold as stars because of their singing ability. Something like the Elvis craze that swept the United States in the fifties and the sixties. None of those guys expected an academy award winning performance from Elvis - all they wanted was to see their favourite singer, live, on screen. Hence, Presley always had roles specially written for him. And the focus was always on his singing ability. Which is exactly happened with Talatsaab. He was born into a highly cultured, but conservative, family in Lucknow. Music interested him to such an extent that he studied it as a subject in Lucknow's Morris College. Often, he sang for the All India Radio, Lucknow. Later, he signed on with HMV. He had to go to Calcutta in 1941 for the recording sessions, which was when he was spotted by the famous New Theatre bosses. Talatsaab was an extremely handsome young man. Even today, despite the ravages of time, a heart attack and a paralytic stroke, there is a certain heartwarming glow about the man. "P K Sanyal of New Theatres wanted me to sign me on as an actor," Talatsaab recalled his early days in Calcutta. "I had no objec- tions, really. But my father was a bit upset, though he came around finally." Calcutta was the scene of hectic filming during the early 1940's. Talatsaab's first film, Raj Lakshmi, co-starred Kanan Bala and Chhabi Biswas. Released in 1945, the film did fairly well and was followed by Samapti with Bharati Devi and Tum Aur Mein with Kanan Devi. Talatsaab had never trained as an actor. He performed by instinct and picked up tips by watching his co-actors on-screen. "I enjoyed acting," recalls Talatsaab. "And these were soft, romantic roles in films that has a number of songs. The films of this era followed the singing hero concept very closely." But the handsome actor, at 22, faced a peculiar problem. Most of his heroines like Kanan Bala and Kanan Devi were older than him and the pairing, at times, looked distinctly odd. During the late 1940s, the focus of movie making shifted from Calcutta to Bombay. Like several other young aspirants, Talatsaab also made the change. He was warmly welcomed; his reputation had preceded him. Music director Anil Biswas gave him a break in Arzoo and his playback singing for Dilip Kumar proved to be a major highlight of the film. During the early 1950s, Talatsaab was sought after by every lead- ing music director. He lent his voice to every single top hero, from Dilip Kumar to Bharat Bhushan. In 1951, he made a guest appearance in the Dev Anand-Madhubala starrer, Aaram, sitting at the piano as he rendered that memorable number, Shukriya shukriya. The film was not much of a success, but the song is hummed

17 Source: Rediff on the net (http://www.rediff.co.in)

even today. His first role as a hero in a Bombay film, though, only came in 1953. "(A R) Kardarsaab chose me as the hero for his film, Dil- E-Nadaan," explained Talatsaab. Newcomer Peace Kanwal, the winner of a beauty contest organised by Kardar and the Kolynos tooth- paste firm, was the heroine. Dil-E-Nadaan was a soft, romantic triangle with Talat, the singer, being wooed by two women, Peace Kanwal and Shyama. The music score by Ghulam Mohammad produced everlasting hits like Zindagi denewale and Yeh raat suhani raat nahi.. Dil-E-Nadaan's music became the rage. And Talatsaab became a sought-after hero in Hindi films. Then followed Daak Babu (with Nadira), Waris, Raftar (Nadira and Naaz) and Diwali Ki Raat (Roopmala, Shashikala and Leela Mishra). In the last mentioned, the elegant Talatsaab played a taxi driver. Well known director Satyen Bose directed him in the 1957 hit, Ek Gaon Ki Kahani (Mala Sinha). Producer S U Sunny - who had made the Dilip Kumar starrers, Babul and Udan Khatola - cast the singer-duo of Suraiya and Talat Mahmood in Maali. The innovative Khayyam scored the music for Lalla Rookh, a fantasy where Talatsaab starred with Shyama. "I never did more than one or two films at a time," Talatsaab recalled. "I also noted the difference between filming in Bombay and filming in Calcutta. Unlike the more artistic Calcutta where movies were made at a slow pace, Bombay was commercial. Life was hectic. Everyone was in his own world and was, of course, very professional." What kind of an impact did Talat Mahmood make as an actor? The great singer thought a while and then candidly admitted, "Listen, I was not competing with stars like Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand or Ashok Kumar. But, in those days, soft, romantic films were appre- ciated and singing hero like me could do well." His films were not box office bonanzas. Neither were they disasters which disap- peared without trace, days after their release. Three of his films - Waris, Sone Ki Chidiya and Ek Gaon Ki Kahani - were much-appreciated hits. Talat Mahmood's major drawback was that, quite often, he held himself back in crucial romantic scenes. His self-consciousness showed. He could not essay violence and comedy. But he was ade- quate as an emotional actor. And he had a large female following. From 1956, Talat Mahmood regularly went on foreign tours. The concerts - held in the UK, the US, the Gulf and even the distant West Indies - were super hits. To the extent that, in the Carib- bean, Indian residents even gave up watching cricket to attend his shows. When he sang in Kabul as the royal guest of King Zahir Shah, the women in the palace competed to get themselves photographed with him. He got a ticker tape welcome in Mauritius. The late Anwar Sadat, president of Egypt, was one of his fans. But the ultimate accolade came from Pakistan - at the packed Karachi stadium, Pak- istani women came in thousands to listen to him. It was a first. It was also a display of star quality. But as he acted in films and spent months abroad on concerts, music directors and produc- ers had to look for other playback singers. As a result, Talatsaab lost out on some memorable films like Madhumati. Some of the music directors felt that, having turned actor, he would not be easily available as a playback singer. As Talatsaab's son, Khalid, explained, "Also, Father would never ask for favours. Not would he undercut anyone. He was, and is, a thorough professional and a gentleman." By the mid-1960's, film music had changed. Shammi Kapoor, with his boisterous Yahoo image, had arrived. There were fewer oppor- tunities for a voice like Talatsaab's. But the concerts contin- ued, so did the recording of private ghazals. The government honoured him with a Padma Bhushan and Doordarshan made a documen- tary on him. Today, Talatsaab leads a retired life in his well maintained Pali Hill flat, watching TV and listening to old songs. Friends and fans are always warmly welcomed. They pour in from all parts of the country to shake hands and cherish the meeting with a singer whose voice, for decades, symbolised the agony and ecstasy of romantic love.

RMIM Archive Article "368".

Talat: melody your name

Posted by: Preeti Ranjan Panda[18] (panda@synopsys.com)

Author: Ambarish Mishra

Usmanbhai, the cabbie from Mahim, Bombay, loves to chat with his clients, switching topics as effortlessly as he changes gears. Hindi film music of yesteryear strikes a friendly chord. So, when the taxi screeches to a halt near a high-rise apartment in Bandra, his face lights up: "Bhaijaan, Talat Mahmoodsaab lives somehwere here." Upon learning that you are going to meet the famous playback singer, the cabbie is only too willing to forego a rupee. "Koi baat nahin. But you must give my salaams to Talatsaab and tell him I still hum his songs." Usmanbhai is one of countless admirers of Talat Mahmood. Though the aficionados of Hindi films have always held him in high esteem, official recognition, however, came a little late. The long overdue Padma Bhushan was bestowed upon the singer only this year. But, true to character, Talat is not resentful. "One feels happy when recognition comes from ones motherland," he muses. Talat is not unaccustomed to accolades. Praise came to him at a very early age from his aunt, Mahalqabegum Kidwai, his lone supporter in a conservative Muslim family of Lucknow. Though his father, Manzoor Mahmood, had a liking for music - the patriarch had a stentorian tone and would be only too willing to display his talent occasionally at public meetings in Lucknow - he wanted young Talat to finish his studies and join the family business - a shop full of glittering lamps and lampshades. A reluctant Talat joined the prestigious Aligarh Muslim University, obviously to please the family head. However, he soon realised that music and not microbiology was his forte. Eager to hone his talents, he joined briefly the famed Morris College of Music in Lucknow. "I did not go beyond raag Yaman-Kalyaan," he remembers. But Talat's teachers had a high opinion about him. "Maybe, I had a good voice." Moreover, hometown Lucknow, reputed for its tehzeeb and thumris, provided a perfect setting for his pursuit. "Saigal was my favourite. I don't know how many hours I have spent humming his songs," he says with pride. Saigal's 'kahoon kya aas niraas bhai' being his favourite. However, Talat did not ape his idol for too long, thanks to the gentle prodding fro aunt Mahalqabegum and Kamal Dasgupta, and extremely talented music director from Calcutta. How he reached Calcutta is interesting to know. Private mehfils in Lucknow and several radio programmes had brought a bit of fame to Talat in the early 1940s. A talent-scouting team from Calcutta's His Master's voice (HMV), led by the irrepressible P. K. Sen, came to Lucknow and on hearing Talat at a private concert, made him sign a contract with HMV. Talat fondly remembers his early days in Calcutta where he came in close contact with legendary figures like Saigal and P. C. Barua. He joined New Theatres when it was passing through a bad patch with stalwarts like Saigal, Barua and Kanan Devi leaving its fold. The company was in need of a young actor-singer and Talat promptly filled the bill. "But New Theatres could not find a suitable heroine for me," chuckles Talat. The much-awaited break for him came in RAAJLAKSHMI. Later, he graduated to play the lead role opposite Bharati Devi in SAMAPTI, "a super-flop". However, under Kamal Dasgupta, private records like 'soye hue hain chaand aur taare', 'panchhi preet ki reet nibha', 'nigaahon ko churaakar rah gayen hain', and 'sab din ek samaan nahin thaa' announced the arrival of a new singing sensation. Nearly a lakh copies of the chart-bursting record 'tasveer teri dil mera bahala na sakegi' were sold in a fortnight. "I became famous," the singer coos softly with his characteristic smile. Soon, Talat's fame reached Bombay. Veteran music director Anil Biswas encouraged him to join tinseltown, and, in March 1948, he landed in Bombay. Meena Mangeshkar fondly remembers the singer's first private mehfil at the residence of Biswas. "Talatji sang a ghazal, and, believe me, I and Latadidi were simply thrilled." So were the countless aficionados of Hindi film music when Talat sang for Dilip Kumar's ARZOO under Anil's baton. The song 'ae dil, mujhe aisi jagah le chal' became an instant hit. The soft, mellifluous voice

18Source: Indian Express

took the Bombay film world by storm and soon he established a reputation as a top singer, honing his talents under ace composers like Anil Biswas, Sajjad Hussain, Vinod, Naushad, C. Ramchandra, Salil Chowdhury, S. D. Burman, Roshan, Madan Mohan, Shankar-Jaikishan, Khayyam and O. P. Nayar, to name a few. Says noted comnposer Naushad Ali, "It was a privilege to work with Talat. He lent grace and izzat to my songs. But his forte is ghazal. He and Begum Akhtar brought an element of tarannum in ghazal singing. Also, in his choice of ghazals, Talat shows his refined sensibilities as an artist." Agrees well-known music director, Salil Chowdhury: "The quality of Talat's voice is excellent. He also took great pains and would not be prepared for the second best." True. The best example of his passion for perfection is 'jalte hain jiske liye', his famous number from SUJATA, which S. D. Burman recorded only after over 50 rehearsals. Little wonder that music directors set aside their treasured compositions for Talat. For over two decoades, he sang a variety of film songs ranging from melancholic ('phir wohi shaam, wohi gham, wohi tanhaaee hai,' or 'raat ne kya kya khwaab dikhaaye') and pure romantic ('jalte hain jiske liye', 'tasveer banaata hoon') to light, foot-tapping numbers ('aha, rimjhim ke ye pyaare pyaare' and 'itna na mujhse tu pyaar'). Talat's gentle, soft voice set the tone of the Hindi films of the 1950s: tales of star-crossed lovers, embellished with rich lyrics and captivating music. The melancholic and romantic Dilip Kumar of the 1950s, cast in the mould of Barua, in incomplete without Talat. From ARZOO to DEVDAS, he crooned some of the best numbers for the actor. "And Dilip Kumar too gave full justice to my songs," says Talat. However, the teamship did not last too long. After DEVDAS, the matinee idol opted for a drastic change in screen persona to keep pace with changing times. He was soon replaced by Mohammad Rafi. Meanwhile, producer-director A. R. Kardar encouraged him to try his luck as an actor. However, the transition from the recording studio to the arc-lights was not fruitful. Talat's films bombed at the box-office and, on the other hand, his singing career too took a nosedive, despite his loud protestations that he had not given up the microphone. Worse, the 1960s began hip-swinging to 'Yaaaaahooooo...' and Talat decided to bow out. "Because the melody was gone from Hindi film music," he says, thumbing through the dog-eared pages of his diary, a sheaf of memories and melodies.

RMIM Archive Article "369".

Talat - Singer with a golden voice

Author: Girija Rajendran[19]

With the passing away of Talat Mahmood, a whole generation of Hindustani cine sangeet has now become history. GIRIJA RAJENDRAN pays a tribute to the ghazal icon. How times have changed and, with them, tunes. The music we hear today bears not the remotest resemblance to the songs falling so softly, on our ears, from the golden era of Hindustani cine sangeet. And a performer who fell extra-softly, extra-sweetly on our ears was Talat Mahmood who, in keeping with his temperament, passed away, quietly, on May 9, at the age of 74. Famed ghazal exponent Jagjit Singh, inheritor of this crooner's legacy, to this day believes that there has been none to rival Talat Mahmood. He argues that ``Talat Mahmood is the ghazal original'' and that all who followed, including himself, were inspired by his style and idiom. To think that the pantheon of singers, on the male side, is all but no more as far as Hindustani cinema goes. First to pass was Mukesh; then we lost Mohammed Rafi; followed by Kishore Kumar and Hemant Kumar; and now Talat Mahmood. Only Manna Dey, the first to enter the field and the oldest of our legendary male playback performers in his 80th year, survives. Indeed, a whole tradition died with Talat Mahmood. The ghazal never was the same, in Indian cinema, since Talat Mahmood lost ground. Progressively, his golden voice became, on the silver screen, a misty memory. But not for his millions of admirers for whom his voice lived on through those never-never nuggets of his. To that generation, ghazal is Talat and Talat is ghazal. Anil Biswas' `Tera Khayal Dil Se Mitaya Naheen Aabhi' (`Doraha'), Naushad's `Husn waalon ko na dil do yeh mita dete hai' (`Babul'), C. Ramachandra's `Mohabbat hi na jo samjhe' (`Parchhain'), Sajjad's `Yeh hawa yeh raat yeh chaandni' (`Sangdil'), S. D. Burman's `Bharan teri wafaaon ka' (`Armaan'), Roshan's `Kisi soorat lagi dil ki behal jaaye' (`Naubahar'), Madan Mohan's `Main paagal mera manwa paagal' (`Ashiana'), Shanker-Jaikishan's `Hain sub se madhur woh geet jinhen' (`Patita'), Salil Chowdhury's `Aansoo samajh ke kyun mujhe' (`Chhaya'), Ghulam Mohammed's `Zindagi dene waale sun' (`Dil-e-Nadan'), Jaidev's `Teri zulfon se pyaar kaun kare' (`Joru Ka Bhai'), Khayyam's `Shaam-e-gham ki kasam' (`Footpath'), O. P. Nayyar's `Pyaar Par bus to naheen hai mera lekin phir bhi' (`Sone Ki Chidiya') and Ravi's `Sub kuchch loota ke hosh mein aaye to kya kiya' (`Ek Saal') - these Talat gems linger, now and forever, in the mindset. Why, even Sardar Malik you identify through a sentimental Talat offering like `Tere dar pe aaya hoon fariyaad le kar' (`Laila Majnu'). The scene today belongs to Sardar's son Anu Malik. But then Hindustani cinema was just not Talat's scene after 1965. Well- bred voices were losing out by then. Madan Mohan, as the ghazal king, made a brave attempt to resurrect Talat Mahmood through `Jahanara' (1964), through such well-remembered solos as `Main teri nazar ka suroor hoon', `Teri aankh ke aansoo pee jaao' and `Phir wohi shaam wohi gham wohi tanhaaii hai'. Madan Mohan had been hooked on to Talat over since this satin voice did the trick for him with `Meri yaad mein tum na aansoo bahana' (`Madhosh') in 1951. And Talat, for his part, rated Madan Mohan's `Bereham aasman meri manzil bata hai kahaan' (`Bahana') and `Yaad jab aaye teri apnee guzari zindagi' (`Mohar') as his two best ever ghazals in cinema. Talat had no ready counter as to why he should have preferred those two ghazals over the same Madan Mohan's `Hum se aaya na gaya' (`Dekh Kabira Roya') and `Do din ki mohabbat mein hum ne' (`Chhote Babu'). Talat Mahmood was something extra special for Madan Mohan. But then Talat's voice was something special for almost all composers of that ambient era. Mention the humblest of music directors and he has come out with at least one stand-out ghazal in

19 Source: The Hindu, May 15 98

Talat's voice. Composers Babul, for instance, with `Jab chhaye kabhi saawan ki ghata' (`Reshmi Roomal') and N. Dutta with `Ashkon mein jo paaya hai' (`Chandi Ki Deewar'). Yet to pinpoint Talat's ghazals in films alone would be to overlook his oeuvre, as a super performer, in the richer realm outside cinema - of private ghazals. The effect Talat left here is peerless in a strain of `Ghazal ke saaz uthaao badi udaas hai raat' and `Jahaan mein koyi naheen hai apna har ek ko khoob aajmaaya'. But the scope for expanding this more `lyrical' sphere (his `private' ghazal contribution) was lost, once our film music turned shockingly hybrid towards the end of the Fifties/ early Sixties. As the glossy ghazal wave of the Eighties divested this song form of what little subtlety it had left, Talat spoke up, demanding to know: ``Why, may I ask, this stress, in the ghazal today, on `saaqi' and `sharaab' all the time to the virtual exclusion of finer feelings? Is there no place, any longer, for the gentle caressing style of ghazal I made famous in the shape of `Nigahon ko chura kar rah gayi rah gayi hai'; or `Gham-e-zindagi ka yaarab na mila koyi kinaraa'; or `Dil ki duniya basa gaya hai kaun'? Why only ghazals, recall the impact I made with geets like `Mera pyaar mujhe lauta do', `Tasveer teri dil mera behla no sakegi', `Ro ro beeta jeevan saara' and `Kya itna bhi adhikaar naheen'? And I compressed, remember, each one of these ghazals and geets into the bare three minutes permitted by a 78 rpm record. Today, we have LPs and cassettes and all that technology by which a singer can spread himself out. But to what poetic end?" Truly was poetry integral to the music that Talat Mahmood made. And it was this intrinsic poetic content in his vocalising that elevated a mere film song, in his crooning custody, to a near art form. Validly did Talat point out to me: ``At one time, I was singing for such divergent heroes as Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand, on the one hand, Bharat Bhooshan, Shammi Kapoor and Ajit, on the other. Yet I always insisted on a certain standard of poetry in the music they created for me, no matter what the budget of the film. In fact, it was to give nuanced expression to such poetry that music directors sought me out. When `Mirza Ghalib' came to be made by Sohrab Modi it went without saying that I was going to sing the theme for Ghulam Mohammed - viz `Phir mujha deedaitar yaad aaya' `Ishq mujh ko na sahi wahshat ki sahi' and `Dil-e-naadaan tujhe hua kya hai'." If Talat alone was needed for such songs, why did music directors stop sending for him? Was it because he tried to turn `singing star' - in the manner of K. L. Saigal - with `Dil-e-Nadan' (1953), `Waris', `Ek Gaaon Ki Kahani', `Lala Rukh' and `Sone Ki Chidiya'? Talat promptly agreed that he lost his slot, as the No. 1 playback performer, because music directors mistakenly thought that he was more interested in being a hero than a singer. ``I wasn't really involved in acting as such," explained Talat. ``True, playing the leading man in some nine films did bring in more money than I earned as a playback singer. But then I had made it clear to every single music director, who mattered, that I was first a singer, then an actor. Yet they seemed already to have made up their minds about not bothering to give me a hearing. Remember, from the outset, our music directors had approached me, not I them. They would ring me each time the song had a very special romantic flavour, particularly if it happened to be a ghazal. For numbers like `Hum dard ke maaron ka' on Dilip Kumar in `Daag'; for `Main dil hoon ek armaan bhara' on Raj Kapoor in `Anhonee'; for `Jaayen to jaayen kahaan' on Dev Anand in `Taxi Driver,' Shanker-Jaikishan, Roshan and S. D. Burman instinctively decided that the voice had to be mine and mine alone. So now, when they suddenly stopped ringing me for even such `specialist' mood numbers, I just didn't know what to do." ``Maybe my aristocratic background came in the way of making the first move! Thus, as I failed to take off as a hero, I also lost my ranking of being the first choice of our music directors for ghazals. I played for high stakes and lost. There is no regret, no rancour. For, even after I ceased to be a hero, each time I was called upon to perform as a playback, I measured up. Even as late as in the case of Bimal Roy's `Sujata', when it was with some hesitation that S. D. Burman summoned me for that `Jalte hain jiske liye' ghazal so well written by Majrooh Sultanpuri, I put everything I had into it. I all but won the Filmfare Best Singer award for the rendition. Yet they had no sustained use for me after that. Romance was becoming more `direct' in our cinema." The eternal

romantic was Talat. Just think of the spell he cast through those duets with Lata Mangeshkar: Anil Biswas `Seene mein sulagte hain armaan' (`Tarana'), C. Ramchandra's `Mohabbat mein aese zamane bhi aaye' (`Sagaai'), Roshan's `Dil-e-beqaraar so jaa' (`Raagran'), Madan Mohan's `Teri Chamakti aankhon ke aagey' (`Chhote Babu'), S. D. Burman's `Tere saath chal rahen hain' (`Angarey'), Salil Chowdhury's `Dil deewaana dil mastaana maane na' (`Awaaz') and Khayyam's `Raaz seene mein mohabbat ka chhipaye rakhna' (`Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke'). Truly was Talat Mahmood's a charismatic voice. Nurtured in the lap of the ghazal culture in Lucknow and exposed, in his salad years, to the artistic atmosphere of Calcutta and New Theatres, Talat Mahmood came to Hindustani cinema with the essence of music and poetry in his highly literary persona. With his impeccable Urdu diction and classy Bengal base (he spoke that language fluently), Talat Mahmood went on to achieve the stature of a ghazal icon for whom poets and music directors alike were eager to compose. They knew his lips had this gift of further refining their composition. Any wonder all other singers insisted on performing before Talat Mahmood at a `mehfil'? They knew the `mehfil' would want to hear none other once Talat cast his vocal sway.

RMIM Archive Article "370".

Naushad on Talat

Author: Naushad (as told to Sharmila Taliculam[20])

How a great voice was stilled Talat Mahmood, of the rich and mellow voice, had a fan following that was more musically aware than those of his contemporaries. Born in Lucknow, his father was a good singer as were his sisters. But coming from a conservative Muslim background, singing was not encouraged. Talat had to choose between a career in acting and singing and staying at home. He opted for the former, though the family accepted the fact only about a decade later when the industry gained respectability. After a three-year course in music, he came to Bombay and did some broadcasting before composer Anil Biswas gave him his first break. Talat acted in a few films, but preferred singing. And when singers arrived who shifted easily between bass and soprano, he could not keep up - his voice didn't allow it. He sang few songs after that. Naushad Ali, the legendary composer, was very close to him. Talat and he came upon the new kind of music together. While Naushad adjusted to the new realities, he admits Talat had his problems. Still, this was also the time Talat began battling with Parkinson's disease. He couldn't sing any more and his career came to a standstill. Naushad remembers Talat the legend and recalls how that rich voice was silenced. The only way to describe Talatsaab is to say that he had a silky voice. I have always said this to everybody who asked me. His voice never suited loud songs, songs that demanded a high-pitched voice. Shouting or screaming didn't suit him and so he avoided those kinds of songs too. He only sang soft, romantic, lyrical, ghazals. His nature was a quiet one. He was a decent man and his voice reflected that decency and sense of calm. When you listen to him, you get the feeling he's a soft-hearted man. Because one's character reflects one's art too. He lived in Lucknow and brought the culture of that place with him. He accorded the same respect to everybody and left a lasting impression. He always smiled, never speaking loudly. I never heard him say anything bad about others. Whenever I went to see him while he was sick, he always welcomed me with a smile on his face. He must have been laughing at the last moment too, I'm sure. He was a legend in the industry. He acted in many films but stopped because it didn't really suit his temperament. We also made films from my production house, Uran Khatola, Babul and Malik, the last with Suraiya. But he really didn't like acting much. Legends like him aren't born everyday and when they do their place can't be filled by anybody. Like K L Saigal, Mohammad Rafi, Mukesh... Nobody can fill their places. Where ghazals were concerned, Talat had the same stature as Begum Akhtar. In Calcutta, he acted in a few films and sang in Bengali too. But he sang just one ghazal and was an instant hit in Bombay. And throughout his career, though he sang many film songs, he was more famous for his ghazals. For my film Babul I made him do the playback for all the songs sung by Dilip Kumar. Talat may not have got the same respect for the film that I did, but I definitely benefited from his singing. I was working in Kardar Productions in the fifties and Talatsaab had come to meet director Nitin Bose's assistant at whose home he was staying. That is where I met him first. He met Anil Biswas first when he came down from Calcutta. I was making a film Palkhi and I thought of asking Talatsaab to sing a song. The song was recorded and picturised. My partner, the director, who died before the film was complete. Another director came in and demanded that the song should be sung by Rafi and not Talat. I told him the song was already picturised, but he wouldn't listen saying Rajendra Kumar, the hero, wanted Rafi to sing for him. Talatsaab was very angry with me. He felt humiliated. I explained what had happened, telling him I was under a contract and didn't have any

20 Source: Rediff on the Net, May 16 98

say in the matter. It happened again with another film, Aadmi. There was a song involving Dilip Kumar and Manoj Kumar, and I asked Talat to sing for Manoj. This film was almost finished when the producer told me that Manoj Kumar wanted Mahendra Kapoor to sing for him. Again, I explained to Talatsaab, but this time he smiled and hugged me saying that it didn't matter anymore. His voice didn't suit the new songs of the time, loud, harsh and demanding a great deal of shouting. Which may be why the heroes didn't like him singing for them. His voice had transparency, it was silky. It was not that he didn't want to sing the new kind of song. He was successful in the sense that he won't be forgotten. His songs have a audience and they will keep his memory alive. Because of his disease, he couldn't sing. He wasn't well those days. Still he was okay with me and understood the situation. After a few months, HMV wanted me to cut a private album and I thought that I should ask Talatsaab to sing the songs. Unfortunately, he began falling ill often and we couldn't do it together. His voice became more unsteady as Parkinson's disease advanced. And he couldn't sit straight or talk clearly. He stopped singing and avoided stage shows. He slowly found it difficult to say anything. He became very dejected and stopped going anywhere. He would remain in his house the whole day. He got trapped in his dejection, his sadness. That worsened his health and he kept going down. But he never showed it. He would be smiling. People knew he was heart-broken, but they respected his silence on the subject. He had a good character and, despite being in this line, was never involved in any scandals. His daughter and son were very respectful to him. His conservative parents had objected to him becoming a singer though they also were musical people. Things only began improving when people from respectable families started joining the industry. He didn't discourage his son from singing either. Financially, he was well situated, though not rich. He signed a deal for his building with the Rahejas and invested the money wisely. Still, people go away, but memories remain. And I believe that they are never forgotten though the image might fade away. I will end by saying: "Sunne wale, meri awaaz to suni, dil bhi toota hai mera, uski bhi jhankar suni." As told to Sharmila Taliculam

RMIM Archive Article "7".

Kishore Kumar an interview with Pritish Nandy

Posted: "Rajan P. Parrikar[21]" (parrikar@mimicad.Colorado.EDU)

Here are excerpts of a tete-a tete with Kishore Kumar and the editor of the Illustrated Weekly, Pritish Nandy. This piece appeared in a cover story entitled "GENIUS" in the April 28, 1985 issue of the Illustrated Weekly.

In the same story, Kishore Kumar ranked HIS favourite 10 songs. They are:

Song	Music	Film
Dukhi man mere	S.D. Burman	Funtoosh
Jag mag jag mag karta nikla	Khemchand Prakash	Rim Jhim
Husn bhi hai udas udas	Anil Biswas	Fareb
Chingari koi Bhadke	R.D. Burman	Amar Prem
Mere naina saawan bhaadon	R.D. Burman	Mehbooba
Koi hum dum na raha	Kishore Kumar	Jhumroo
Mere mehboob kayamat hogi	Laxmikant-Pyarelal	Mr X in Bombay
Koi hota jisko apna	Salil Chowdhury	Mere Apne
Woh Shaam kuch ajeeb thi	Hemant Kumar	Khamoshi
Badi sooni sooni hai	S.D. Burman	Milee

PN=Pritish Nandy
KK=Kishore Kumar

++++++

Let him remain enshrined in our memory. Let his songs remain just HIS songs. Let not even one person say that Kishore Kumar sang them better.

PN: If you didn't like Bombay, why did you stay back? For fame? For money?

KK: I was conned into it. I only wanted to sing. Never to act. But somehow, thanks to peculiar circumstances, I was persuaded to act in the movies. I hated every moment of it and tried virtually every trick to get out of it. I muffed my lines, pretended to be crazy, shaved my head off, played difficult, began yodelling in the midst of tragic scenes, told Meena Kumari what I was supposed to tell Bina Rai in some other film - but they still wouldn't let me go. I screamed, ranted, went cuckoo. But who cared? They were just determined to make me a star.

PN: Why?

KK: Because I was Dadamoni's brother. And he was a great hero.

PN: But you succeeded, after your fashion....

KK: Of course I did. I was the biggest draw after Dilip Kumar. There were so many films I was doing in those days that I had to run from one set to the other, changing on the way. Imagine me. My shirts flying off, my trousers falling off, my wig coming off while I'm running from one set to the other. Very often I would mix up my lines and look angry in a romantic scene or romantic in the midst of a fierce battle. It was terrible and I hated it. It evoked nightmares of school. Directors were like schoolteachers. Do this. Do that. Don't do this. Don't do that. I dreaded it. That's why I would often escape.

PN: Well, you are notorious for the trouble you give your directors and producers. Why is that?

KK: Nonsense. They give me trouble. You think they give a damn for me? I matter to them only because I sell. Who cared for me during my bad days? Who cares for anyone in this profession?

PN: Is that why you prefer to be a loner?

KK: Look, I don't smoke, drink or socialise. I never go to parties. If that makes me a loner, fine. I am happy this way. I go to work and I come back straight home. To watch my horror movies, play with my spooks, talk to my trees, sing. In this avaricious world, every creative person is bound to be lonely. How can you deny me that right?

PN: You don't have many friends?

KK: None.

PN: That's rather sweeping.

KK: People bore me. Film people particularly bore me. I prefer talking to my trees.

PN: So you like nature?

KK: That's why I want to get away to Khandwa. I have lost all touch with nature out here. I tried to did a canal all around my

bungalow out here, so that we could sail gondolas there. The municipality chap would sit and watch and nod his head disapprovingly, while my men would dig and dig. But it didn't work. One day someone found a hand - a skeletal hand- and some toes. After that no one wanted to dig anymore. Anoop, my second brother, came charging with Ganga water and started chanting mantras. He thought this house was built on a graveyard. Perhaps it is. But I lost the chance of making my home like Venice.

PN: People would have thought you crazy. In fact they already do.

KK: Who said I'm crazy. The world is crazy; not me.

PN: Why do you have this reputation for doing strange things?

KK: It all began with this girl who came to interview me. In those days I used to live alone. So she said: You must be very lonely. I said: No, let me introduce you to some of my friends. So I took her to the garden and introduced her to some of the friendlier trees. Janardhan; Raghunandan; Gangadhar; Jagannath; Buddhuram; Jhatpatajhatpatpat. I said they were my closest friends in this cruel world. She went and wrote this bizarre piece, saying that I spent long evenings with my arms entwined around them. What's wrong with that, you tell me? What's wrong making friends with trees?

PN: Nothing.

KK: Then, there was this interior decorator-a suited, booted fellow who came to see me in a three-piece woollen, Saville Row suit in the thick of summer- and began to lecture me about aesthetics, design, visual sense and all that. After listening to him for about half an hour and trying to figure out what he was saying through his peculiar American accent, I told him that I wanted something very simple for my living room. Just water-several feet deep- and little boats floating around, instead of large sofas. I told him that the centre-piece should be anchored down so that the tea service could be placed on it and all of us could row up to it in our boats and take sips from our cups. But the boats should be properly balanced, I said, otherwise we might whizz past each other and conversation would be difficult.

He looked a bit alarmed but that alarm gave way to sheer horror when I began to describe the wall decor. I told him that I wanted live crows hanging from the walls instead of paintings-since I liked nature so much. And, instead of fans, we could have monkeys farting from the ceiling. That's when he slowly backed out from the room with a strange look in his eyes. The last I saw of him was him running out of the front gate, at a pace that would have put an electric train to shame. What's crazy about having a living room like that, you tell me? If he can wear a woollen, three-piece suit in the height of summer, why can't I hang live crows on my walls?

PN: Your ideas are quite original, but why do your films fare so badly?

KK: Because I tell my distributors to avoid them. I warn them at the very outset that the film might run for a week at the most. Naturally, they go away and never come back. Where will you find a producer-director who warns you not to touch his film because even he can't understand what he has made?

PN: Then why do you make films?

KK: Because the spirit moves me. I feel I have something to say and the films eventually do well at times.

I remember this film of mine - Door Gagan ki Chhaon mein - which started to an audience of 10 people in Alankar. I know because I was in the hall myself. There were only ten people who had come to watch the first show!

Even its release was peculiar. Subhodh Mukherjee, the brother of my brother-in-law, had booked Alankar(the hall) for 8 weeks for his film April Fool- which everyone knew was going to be a block-buster. My film, everyone was sure, was going to be a thundering flop. So he offered to give me a week of his booking. Take the first week, he said flamboyantly, and I'll manage within seven. After all, the movie can't run beyond a week. It can't run beyond two days, I reassured him.

When 10 people came for the first show, he tried to console me. Don't worry, he said, it happens at times. But who was worried? Then, the word spread. Like wildfire. And within a few days the hall began to fill. It ran for all 8 weeks at Alankar, house full! Subodh Mukherjee kept screaming at me but how could I let go the hall? After 8 weeks when the booking ran out, the movie shifted to Super, where it ran for another 21 weeks! That's the anatomy of a hit of mine. How does one explain it? Can anyone explain it? Can Subodh Mukherjee, whose April Fool went on to become a thundering flop?

PN: But you, as the director should have known?

KK: Directors know nothing. I never had the privilege of working with any good director. Except Satyen Bose and Bimal Roy, no one even knew the ABC of film making. How can you expect me to give good performances under such directors?

Directors like S.D. Narang didn't even know where to place the camera. He would take long, pensive drags from his cigarette, mumble 'Quiet, quiet, quiet' to everyone, walk a couple of furlongs absentmindedly, mutter to himself and then tell the camera man to place the camera wherever he wanted. His standard line to me was: Do something. What something? Come on, some thing! So I would go off on my antics. Is this the way to act? Is this the way to direct a movie? And yet Narangsaab made so many hits!

PN: Why didn't you ever offer to work with a good director?

KK: Offer! I was far too scared. Satyajit Ray came to me and wanted me to act in Parash Pathar - his famous comedy - and I was so scared that I ran away. Later, Tulsi Chakravarti did the role. It was a

great role and I ran away from it, so scared I was of these great directors.

PN: But you knew Ray.

KK: Of course I did. I loaned him five thousand rupees at the time of Pather Panchali-when he was in great financial difficulty- and even though he paid back the entire loan, I never gave him an opportunity to forget the fact that I had contributed to the making of the classic. I still rib him about it. I never forget the money I loan out!

PN: Well, some people think you are crazy about money. Others describe you as a clown, pretending to be kinky but sane as hell. Still others find you cunning and manipulative. Which is the real you?

KK: I play different roles at different times. For different people. In this crazy world, only the truly sane man appears to be mad. Look at me. Do you think I'm mad? Do you think I can be manipulative?

PN: How would I know?

KK: Of course you would know. It's so easy to judge a man by just looking at him. You look at these film people and you instantly know they're rogues.

PN: I believe so.

KK: I don't believe so. I know so. You can't trust them an inch. I have been in this rat race for so long that I can smell trouble from miles afar. I smelt trouble the day I came to Bombay in the hope of becoming a playback singer and got conned into acting. I should have just turned my back and run.

PN: Why didn't you?

KK: Well, I've regretted it ever since. Boom Boom. Boompitty boom boom. Chikachikachik chik chik. Yadlehe eeee yadlehe ooooo (Goes on yodelling till the tea comes. Someone emerges from behind the upturned sofa in the living room, looking rather mournful with a bunch of rat-eaten files and holds them up for KK to see)

PN: What are those files?

KK: My income tax records.

PN: Rat-eaten?

KK: We use them as pesticides. They are very effective. The rats die quite easily after biting into them.

PN: What do you show the tax people when they ask for the papers?

KK: The dead rats.

PN: I see.

KK: You like dead rats?

PN: Not particularly.

KK: Lots of people eat them in other parts of the world.

PN: I guess so.

KK: Haute cuisine. Expensive too. Costs a lot of money.

PN: Yes?

KK: Good business, rats. One can make money from them if one is

enterprising.

PN: I believe you are very fussy about money. Once, I'm told. a producer paid you only half your dues and you came to the sets with half your head and half your moustache shaved off. And you told him that when he paid the rest, you would shoot with your face intact...

KK: Why should they take me for granted? These people never pay unless you teach them a lesson. I was shooting in the South once. I think the film was Miss Mary and these chaps kept me waiting in the hotel room for five days without shooting. So I got fed up and started cutting my hair. First I chopped off some hair from the right side of my head and then, to balance it, I chopped off some from the left. By mistake I overdid it. So I cut off some more from the right. Again I overdid it. So I had to cut from the left again. This went on till I had virtually no hair left- and that's when the call came from the sets. When I turned up the way I was, they all collapsed. That's how rumours reached Bombay. They said I had gone cuckoo. I didn't know. I returned and found everyone wishing me from long distance and keeping a safe distance of 10 feet while talking. Even those chaps who would come and embrace me waved out from a distance and said Hi. Then, someone asked me a little hesitantly how I was feeling. I said: Fine. I spoke a little abruptly perhaps. Suddenly I found him turning around and running. Far, far away from me.

PN: But are you actually so stingy about money?

KK: I have to pay my taxes.

PN: You have income tax problems I am told....

KK: Who doesn't? My actual dues are not much but the interest has piled up. I'm planning to sell off a lot of things before I go to Khandwa and settle this entire business once and for all.

PN: You refused to sing for Sanjay Gandhi during the emergency and, it is said, that's why the tax hounds were set on you. Is this true?

KK: Who knows why they come. But no one can make me do what I don't want to do. I don't sing at anyone's will or command. But I sing for charities, causes all the time.

[Note: Sanjay Gandhi wanted KK to sing at some Congress rally in Bombay. KK refused. Sanjay Gandhi ordered All India Radio to stop playing Kishore songs. This went on for quite a while. KK refused to apologize. Finally, it took scores of prominant producers and directors to convince those in power to rescind the ban- Rajan]

PN: What about your home life? Why has that been so turbulent?

KK: Because I like being left alone.

PN: What went wrong with Ruma Devi, your first wife?

KK: She was a very talented person but we could not get along because we looked at life differently. She wanted to build a choir and a

career. I wanted someone to build me a home. How can the two reconcile? You see, I'm a simple minded villager type. I don't understand this business about women making careers. Wives should first learn how to make a home. And how can you fit the two together? A career and a home are quite seperate things. That's why we went our seperate ways.

PN: Madhubala, your second wife?

KK: She was quite another matter. I knew she was very sick even before I married her. But a promise is a promise. So I kept my word and brought her home as my wife, even though I knew she was dying from a congenital heart problem. For 9 long years I nursed her. I watched her die before my own eyes. You can never understand what this means until you live through this yourself. She was such a beautiful woman and she died so painfully.

She would rave and rant and scream in frustration. How can such an active person spend 9 long years bed-ridden? And I had to humour her all the time. That's what the doctor asked me to. That's what I did till her very last breath. I would laugh with her. I would cry with her.

PN: What about your third marriage? To Yogeeta Bali?

KK: That was a joke. I don't think she was serious about marriage. She was only obsessed with her mother. She never wanted to live here.

PN: But that's because she says you would stay up all night and count money..

KK: Do you think I can do that? Do you think I'm mad? Well, it's good we separated quickly.

PN: What about your present marriage?

KK: Leena is a very different kind of person. She too is an actress like all of them but she's very different. She's seen tragedy. She's faced grief. When your husband is shot dead, you change. You understand life. You realise the ephemeral quality of all things..

I am happy now.

PN: What about your new film? Are you going to play hero in this one too?

KK: No no no. I'm just the producer-director. I'm going to be behind the camera. Remember I told you how much I hate acting? All I might do is make a split second appearance on screen as an old man or something.

PN: Like Hitchcock?

KK: Yes, my favourite director.

I'm mad, true. But only about one thing. Horror movies. I love spooks. They are a friendly fearsome lot. Very nice people, actually, if you get to know them. Not like these industry chaps out here. Do you know any spooks?

PN: Not very friendly ones.

KK: But nice, frightening ones?

PN: Not really.

KK: But that's precisely what we're all going to become one day. Like

this chap out here (points to a skull, which he uses as part of his decor, with red light emerging from its eyes)- you don't even know whether it's a man or a woman. Eh? But it's a nice sort. Friendly too. Look, doesn't it look nice with my specs on its non-existent nose?

PN: Very nice indeed.

KK: You are a good man. You understand the real things of life. You are going to look like this one day.

RMIM Archive Article "8".

Kishore Kumar

Posted: "Rajan P. Parrikar[22]" (parrikar@mimicad.Colorado.EDU)

Namashkaar. Here is yetanudder piece on Kishore Kumar, in com- memoration of The One and Only's seventh death anniversary which falls on October 13. -- The legend of Kishore Kumar began 37 years back, when a young lad from Khandwa turned up in Bombay, to meet his brother Ashok Kumar, then a superstar, and wangle an introduction to K.L. Sai- gal, the great singer whom he idolised. He never got to meet Saigal, but was coaxed, cajoled, bullied into stardom and ended up becoming the most successful comic hero Hindi films has ever seen. With a long string of hits to his credit and an unfulfilled ambition to be the most famous singer in the land. The ambition he realised much later, as his songs began to find a bigger and bigger market in the land. So he quit the grime and greasepaint and stuck to warbling. Becoming a bigger and bigger star in the process. Today, he is on the top. The unquestionable king of the disc. Paid an incredible amount for every song he sings. And chased by a virtual army of income tax officers, hoping to get their hands on part of the money. Married to four of the most interesting women in filmdom, at dif- ferent times of his life -Ruma Devi, Madhubala, Yogeeta Bali and Leena Chandavarkar - Kishore Kumar's penchant for the comic and the bizarre has created a strange reputation for him. Everyone thinks he is crazy and the stories doing the rounds are absolute- ly incredible. If rumours are to be believed, he has turned cuckoo several times already. Pritish Nandy met the singing superstar last week, just after his announcement that he was quitting everything and going back to his ancestral village at Khandwa. To sit back and watch the sun set in its glorious hues. Who would like to stay in this hell hole?, declaims Kishore Kumar. Bombay stinks. So does this stupid, juvenile film indus- try where money alone speaks the language of power, talent and authority. I'd rather go back to my roots. ---------- He doesn't smoke. He doesn't drink. He has no friends and never socialises. And there's one thing he treasures more than money. His solitude. That's Kishore Kumar for you, the man with the gol- den voice, who has reigned over the world of popular music for almost two decades now. A madcap genius, fiercely committed to the bizarre and the outra- geous, he has over the years nurtured carefully his image as a strange, unpredictable man who defies definition. At the same time he has sung and danced his way into the hearts of millions of Indians who swear by him. So the film industry, always a worshipper of success, has chased him with money and accolades. In the hope of taming him, as it has always tamed the talented. But, to Kishore Kumar, this has meant nothing. He has wallowed in solitude, yodelling at the moon. He has married four of the most interesting women in the industry and picked up more money than you and I can ever dream of. And, what is perhaps most important, done it without compromising anything whatsoever. On his own terms. Always. At his peak, when for almost a decade he was number one to number ten, all rolled into one, and there was no one to be seen any- where around, he would be running from one recording studio to the next. Singing sometimes four to five songs a day. And charg- ing exactly one rupee less than Lata Mangeshkar - in deference to her seniority. What precisely does that mean in terms of actual figures? Well, if rumours are to be believed - and usually relai- ble industry sources - every song recorded would make him Rs. 15000 richer. Multiply that by several songs a day, and a reign over almost two decades, and you have Fort Knox at Juhu. Not bad for a man who never had any formal training in music nor a guru. Who still can't read notations and cannot name more than three classical Indian singers without prompting. He has only four idols in life. K.L. Saigal; Marlon Brando; Boris Karloff; and Topol of Fiddler on the Roof fame. All over his house you will see their giant-sized photo- graphs and posters framed. And, if you share his enthusiasm for them, he might just condescend to give you the time of day. Otherwise you might never get to see the man - so ferociously does he preserve his privacy. Interviews are out. Visitors rarely get past the front gate. Kishore Kumar Ganguly, for that is his full name, arrived in Bom- bay in the late forties, in the hope of

22Source: The Illustrated Weekly of India, April 28, 1985.

meeting K.L. Saigal, his childhood idol. But pecualiar circumstances - and the fact that his eldest brother Ashok Kumar was already a hit hero of those days - forced him into bit roles as an actor. He hated acting but was too scared to tell his elder brother that. So singing got pushed into the background and he started to make a living as an actor. Luck stood by the shy young man and within a couple of years he hit the big league. As the funny hero, who sang, danced and en- tertained - as against the usual dour-faced, romantic kinds, who would break into tears at the slightest pretext. It worked. And Kishore Kumar became a runaway success. So popular was he in those days that he could hardly keep track of the number of films he was doing. And his habit of trying to always play truant began the legend of the eccentric. Producers and directors were always chasing him - and he was perpetually trying to run away from the sets. Where? To the privacy of his home, where he lived alone. For Ruma, his first wife, had already left him and gone to Cal- cutta - where she settled down with a little-known film-maker. So busy was he in those days that once in a while someone else had to playback for him. Like Mohammad Rafi did in Shararat. Un- believable for someone whose first love was singing and who was determined to ultimately get down to it seriously. He now married for the second time. Madhubala, the most exquisite heroine that Indian cinema has perhaps ever produced, was his second wife. But, she, alas, was a very sick woman then and they spent nine tormented years together - during which period he vir- tually sat by and watched her die of a congenital heart ailment that no one could cure. Meanwhile the legends grew. Of his weird ways. His strange, out- landish lifestyle. His miserliness. His quirks. His kinky behaviour. Legends he encouraged because they helped him to preserve his solitude and kept the industry at a distance. An in- dustry he had nothing but contempt for. The stories are legion about how he taught erring producers les- sons. Particularly those who failed to pay him his dues in time. Once he turned up on the sets with exactly half his face made up because the producer had only settled half his dues. Another time, an unluckier producer found him with half his head and half his moustache shaved off because he had not paid him more than half his money. The shooting schedules had to be cancelled for almost a month. Mehmood, one of the few people in the industry he can still call a friend, has described how he once had to hire a pistol to threaten Kishore Kumar so that he could come to the sets. He laughs off most of these stories today as exaggeration but concedes that he had to try every trick in the trade - and many outside it as well - just to make people pay him his legiti- mate dues in an industry notorious for its unkept promises. As for the money he has made, he claims that the income tax au- thorities have virtually reduced him to penury by taxing him on not just whatever he has earned but adding on interest on all de- layed payments. It will take me more than another lifetime to settle all my dues with them, once and for all, rues the singer in one of his rare serious moments. After living alone for quite some years after the legendary Madhubala's death, Kishore Kumar tied the nuptial knot again. This time, with the young and upcoming actress, Yogeeta Bali. It was his shortest marriage and collapsed even before it got going, thanks to the bitter feud between the actress' ambitious mother and the irritable husband. A quick divorce, and a reportedly large settlement, and she was out of his Gaurikunj like a shot - to marry Mithun Chakravarty, the actor, shortly thereafter. In the meantime, Kishore - who had switched lanes from the sing- ing star to the king of the playback empire - kept doing better and better, for those were the golden days of both the film in- dustry and the music business. Piracy had still not arrived on the scene and big films were raking in big money. The record com- panies were competing with each other for the high stakes in the music business and everything was ticketty boo. The king of the bompitty boom boom boom boom was yodelling away to glory, sitting on top of the heap. But things are no longer the same these days. The death watch is on in the movie business, with rampant video piracy and popular television wooing away the audiences. The bottom has dropped out of the music industry and the recording companies are virtually counting their last days. The great music directors have died or have simply faded away. And even though Kishore still remains on the top, he is a sad, dis- illusioned man filled with memories of better days. He is now married again. To actress Leena Chandavarkar, who has borne him another son. And they live together as a happy family, surrounded by thousands of horror film cassettes and memories of years gone by. The kinks remain. The skull in the bedroom with red light emerg- ing from its eyes. The upturned chairs in the living room. The relics of the old car that played the protagonist in Chalti ka Naam Gadi. The large

photographs and posters of his idols staring down at you from every corner of the house. The cuckoo clock in the living room. The board outside Gaurikunj that warns you to enter at your own risk. The phone that rings and rings for hours before anyone attends to it. If he keeps his word and quits Bombay, as he has threatened to last month, tinseltown will be poorer. And it's just possible he might. For his native Khandwa still beckons to him: the call of the skies, the trees, the good earth - for a simple man who loved all these and lost them, chasing the quick buck in Bombay's as- phalt jungle. He never loved the city. He hated the movie busi- ness and had honest contempt for its people. All he did was make money and hope for a miracle. The miracle never happened. The void in his heart just grew and grew. And less and less people understood the agony and the ecstasy of his stardom, as he found himself pushed more and more into the privacy of his own world, searching for his own truths. They call him crazy. But who is more crazy? Kishore Kumar or those who try to perpetuate this ruthless, insensate rat race where only the winners count. What victory? At what price? Let's ask Kishore himself. ---------- (The interview that follows was posted some years ago; refer to the rmim-faq) Rajan Parrikar

RMIM Archive Article "9".

Kishore Kumar - A Tribute

Posted: "Rajan P. Parrikar[23]" (parrikar@mimicad.Colorado.EDU)

Author: K.N. Subramaniam

Late afternoon, October 13, 1987. Kishore Kumar suffers a massive heart attack, slumps down into wife Leena's arms, and is forever lost to the world. He was 58. Only a day earlier, he was his usu- al clowning self at the recording of a duet (Guru O Guru) with Asha Bhonsle. It was getting to be such a laugh-riot that Asha had to plead with him, "Kishore-da, aur hasaayaa mujhe to main gaa nahin sakungi." When Bappi Lahiri asked him to "put more ex- pression into the song, Kishore jested, 'Ask the producer to give me Rs 200 extra and I'll give more expression.'" Six years have elapsed, but Kishore still lives. Will always live. A coincidence that the Big Three - Rafi, Mukesh, Kishore - of the Hindi film music world went out in the same manner, suddenly and via massive heart attacks. Or is it? Perhaps only those whom He loves dearly are offered such quick exit. Reproduced below is a tribute to Kishore Kumar, taken from Filmfare (November 1-15, 1987). Rajan

----- "Zindagi ko bahut pyar humne diya, Maut se bhi mohabbat nibhay- enge hum" he sang. You bet he is doing just that, keeping every- one up there spellbound with his songs of life - and death, or in stitches with his comic antics. A couple of years ago, he declared he was planning to return to Khandwa, his hometown. No one expected him to keep his word. The way he did - his last journey. Did he really hate the world or the film industry? Not likely. For hating is sustained, moronic hard work - of a kind Kishore Kumar never relished. Not that he was the easy going kind - he put an immense amount of work in his films. They had titles like "Door Ka Rahi", "Door Gagan Ki Chhaon Mein", "Door Waadiyon Mein Kahin". They were about the pain of living, not belonging, going away. He was producer, director, actor, singer, composer, lyri- cist, and, very nearly, cinematographer as well. More likely, he was running away from himself. No one can really say why. A sensitive man, he probably couldn't take the ruthless- ness, the nitty-gritty of the work-a-day world. A sentence from one of his early interviews to Filmfare is still fresh in our minds: "Money, money, that's all that matters." He was of course to make plenty of it! He was full of contradictions. After a performance tour of the US with Lata Mangeshkar, he told us, "I'll never sing with Lata again." Some little peeve. Of course he went on singing with Lata. He sent her a placatory letter declaring how full of brotherly love he was for her. He took pride in not smoking or drinking but he indulged other- wise. He didn't seem the marrying kind, but he married four times. If you wondered how the women stood him, he would surely have said he wondered himself. Often, he gave the impression of a man who couldn't stand himself. He disliked crowds but loved his audience. When they warmed up to him, he would go all out to entertain them. He went all out at our own award shows. Once he occupied the stage for a good hour and a half. Later, we learnt he had a video recording made for his own purpose. But never mind, that was Kishore. A seeming recluse and misanthrope, he put show into stage shows. He started them apparently to earn money to pay his income tax arrears. He made Kishore Kumar live by prancing around the stage, fooling around. But as Filmfare once said of him, it takes brains to be a fool. He could have had a marvellous career as an actor. When other ac- tors were busy trying to be serious, he succeeded in being seri- ously funny. But he virtually threw away his acting career, building up a notoriety for late coming or bunking shootings. Then Aradhana brought him back as a singer. They say he was always difficult. It was tough to get him to come to recordings, but no playback singer took more pains over his songs. He was the first singer to sing

---

23 Source: Filmfare(November 1-15, 1987).

not only for his audience but for the star on screen - he could be a Dev Anand, a Rajesh Khanna, a Sanjeev Kumar, an Amitabh Bachchan. He wanted people to keep a distance from him, but his songs brought people close to him. When you are very happy or very sad, you want to listen to Kishore Kumar. On the very evening he died, with mourners still paying their last respects to him at home, Doordarshan telecast a Kishore Kumar-Kalyanji- Anandji show. In the midst of it, Kishore said, "Kalyanjibhai, gaate gaate mar gaye." Goodbye friend and stranger, always so near and so far away, ex- asperatingly difficult yet lovable, full of guile yet tran- sparent. And so abundantly talented. Rajan Parrikar

RMIM Archive Article "10".

Kishore Kumar - In his Own Words - Some Interviews.

Posted: "Rajan P. Parrikar[24]" (parrikar@mimicad.Colorado.EDU)

"My father Kunjalal Ganguli, was a pleader (advocate) who earned Rs 30 a month. My mama, Dhananjay Banerjee, a classical singer, was the only family link I had with music. But I was never trained to be a singer. It was my brother Dadamoni who learnt music from the well-known Saraswati Devi." ******** "Very early in life I was fascinated by K.L. Saigal. I used to save my pocket money to buy his records. He's my real guru." ******** "In Padosan, I mimicked my mama - long hair, kajal in the eyes, constant paan-chewing and the works. My performance was so perfect that shooting was halted after two days. Both Mehmood and Sunil felt that I was stealing every scene from them, and they got down to working on their get-ups. That's how Mehmood and Sunil got to wearing wigs etc." ******** "When I married Leena I didn't expect to be a father again. After all, I was in my fifties then. But Sumeet has been a source of immense joy to me. Leena, Amit, Sumeet and I today make a well-adjusted foursome. I had always longed for a secure, happy family. It remained just a dream until Leena came along. With her, for the first time, I have achieved emotional security." ******** "I was surprised when "Lata agreed to do stage shows with me in London. Though I was thrilled, I was worried about one thing - her discipline. She would never go on stage without proper rehearsal. But I like to take things easy. We had to sing five duets: Chai pe bulaya hain (Souten), Gata rahe mera dil (Guide), Jai jai shiv shankar (Aap ki Kasam), Accha to hum chalte hain (Aan Milo Sajana) and Kora kagaz tha yeh man mera (Aradhana). The problem arose when it was time for us to go on stage. We couldn't decide who should go first. I suggested that Lata sing first because she was my senior. But she didn't. Instead she went on stage to introduce me. She praised me a lot, but made it a point to add, "I call him Da because he is older to me". Yes, I'm one month and 24 days older than her! We did three shows in Wembley. During the first one there was a problem because organizer had publicised that we'd be singing "Angrezi mein kehte hain I love you"(Khuddar). But Lata refused to sing the song because it contained the word 'idiot' in it. Again she put her foot down against "Pag ghungroo" (Namak Halal) because she said it belittled Meerabai. Instead, she said, I should sing a bhajan. I was nonplussed because I couldn't remember any. Finally, I managed to sing one - Hari naam ka pyaala - rendered originally by S.D. Burman. It was received with great applause." ******** "I am a crazy fan of Topol's. When we were in London, I saw an advertisement of "Fiddler on the Roof" in the drama section of a newspaper. I thought they'd made a mistake. When I checked, I was told that there WAS a stage show of "Fiddler...". I can't tell you how thrilled I was. I had seen the film at least a hundred times and now I had an opportunity to see my favourite actor perform right in front of me. Would you believe it, I attended all the four consecutive shows. I went backstage to introduce myself to Topol and even took his autograph. I still remember the date - September 9, 1983. He presented me a copy of his autobiography, Topol by Topol, and I presented him the records and cassettes of my songs. In 1960, he was only 48-49 but still he played the old man so beautifully. I think nobody, just nobody, can perform the way Topol did in Fiddler. He actually sings through the whole film. Neither Dilip Kumar nor Ashok Kumar can match him." ******** More from the same issue: "My brother Ashok discouraged Anoop and me from joining films. You are a pair of donkeys, he said", Kishore Kumar gleefully narrated to Filmfare in 1955. When Ashok Kumar became a favourite Bombay Talkies hero, Kishore was still at college "trying to get through examinations". "I could do little else besides sing" Kishore said frankly. "I was never good at studies so I used to compose different tunes for different subjects. For instance I composed a tune for a paragraph on the Malthusian theory of population." The Gangulys used to visit Bombay once a year. During one of these visits Kishore was asked by the music director, Khemchand Prakash to sing for Dev Anand in Ziddi. Kishore became very popular as a playback singer and got many assignments, but even then he was not very

24Source: Filmfare(November 1-15, 1987).

serious about a film career. In a diary he wrote for Filmfare in 1957, Kishore talked of Ashok. "I'm in fifth form and I'm very proud of my brother. Hasn't Ashok Kumar Ganguly of Khandwa become a film star?" Jeevan Naiya, Ashok's first film, comes to Khandwa. Kishore and a few friends of his, all fans of Master Vithal and other action heroes of stunt films, eagerly go to see "Big brother laying low a dozen villains", but are disappointed. It's a soft sentimental film - and Ashok Kumar even puts up with a slap from another character. "That very night," said Kishore, "I write Dadamoni a letter, telling him he had better swing his fists around a bit in his next film or he will lose a number of fans in Khandwa." In the same diary, Kishore recalled attending a night shooting of Mahal, starring Ashok Kumar and Madhubala, at Filmistan Studios in Bombay. During a break in shooting, Kishore gave Madhubala a big fright putting on "a grotesque mask with a drooping moustache" which he had taken along with him. Years later, he was to marry her. Writing an interview with Kishore in 1970, a Filmfare staffer noted that it added to "that well-known Kishore Kumar mystique of lack of continuity and endless little puzzles." Though Kishore didn't appear from or disappear into any cupboards during the interview, he did exit, for no particular reason, through a rear door of the room and re-entered through the front door enjoying immensely the journalist's momentary bafflement. The room had photographs of Rabindranath Tagore, Ashok Kumar and Dev Anand and a painting of "The Last Supper". The interview recorded that Kishore's dislikes were telephone calls, tax problems, cigarette smoke, alcohol and the studio routine. ********** Again from the same issue of PhillumFare. Preeti Ganguly, KK's niece and Ashok Kumar's daughter, reminisces. It's impossible to believe that Kishore Kaka is dead. How could a man who breathed life into everything around him die? He was my favourite uncle - it seems so strange to say 'was'. Not that we saw him very frequently or were extremely close. But he was very childlike and innocent. There was always a sense of wonder about him. His eccentric ways weren't just for outsiders. If others complained that they weren't allowed past his gate, his behaviour was not any different with us. He'd do it with us too. There were times when he would himself invite our family over for lunch, we'd go up all the way to Juhu and end up waiting at the gate. There, right within our view, Kishore Kaka would ask his man to tell us he wasn't in, if he wasn't in the mood to receive us. Mummy would get irritated, then hand over what she had carried for him, and say to the man, "I've brought him some of his favourite food. The least he can do is eat it." And we'd all have to return without getting past those doors. We had a house in Bangalore, a huge sprawling one on an acre of land near the army establishment. It had always been drilled into our young minds that the land was once a burial ground. We went there for our holidays once. Amit must've been about 5 years old. While I was between three and four. The place was spooky, the atmosphere eerie - and we were very scared. So much so, that we would accompany each other to the bathroom too. And Kaka would insist on telling us a story - a ghost story, at the dead of night. He'd take us to a certain room from where you could see willow trees swaying outside in the wind. Kaka would insist that we sit with our back to the window and we'd obediently do that. Then he would point to a tree under which a Colonel had supposedly committed suicide and start narrating a spooky tale. That wasn't all. He would deliberately provide eerie sound effects to go with that story: tan tan, thak thak thak. And he'd even jump at us suddenly. All this was most nerve-racking - Amit and I would literally be quaking with fear. If we turned our heads to look at the trees, he'd say,"Peechhe se haath aaya", and then add "Colonel abhi nahi aayegaa, baad mein aayegaa." Which made it worse. There was one particular story (one of the many cooked up by Kaka) called The Golden Hand, which was the worst. Whenever I heard that one, I wet my pants. Literally. Like Dad, Kaka was quite paranoid about money, and about not being paid. But Kaka's eccentricities made him do funny things. .....At another time when he discovered his dues hadn't been fully paid, Kaka landed up for shooting with make-up on only one side of his face. No one really noticed, until all the lights were switched on. "What's this?" asked the shocked director. Kaka nonchalently replied, "Aadha paisa to aadha make-up. Pura paisa to pura make-up."..... Kaka's mad ways could take other forms too. Once, when his car was caught in a traffic jam, he happened to be outside a grocer's shop. "Yeh laal laal kya hain?", he asked his driver Abdul. "Masur ki daal hain", Abdul replied. In a flash Kaka was reminded of Mussoorie and he told Abdul, "Chalo Mussoorie chalen." And then he took off for Mussoorie right from there itself. When I was at FTII, I was exposed to a lot of his films. Half Ticket, Chalti ka Naam Gaadi and all the rest. I marvelled at his sense of timing. Some of his films were

totally mad but he had a terrific feel for the absurd. During the shooting of Badti Ka Naam Daadi, some clothes, without which the continuity of the scene would be affected, had been inadvertantly left behind. It would have been too much of an effort and expense to fetch them. Kaka improvised and introduced a new scene right in the middle of the first. The scene showed him sitting on a chair in the middle of nowhere, saying, "I'm the director, I'll do anything I want". The next scene had everybody continuing with the earlier scene - in different clothes!..... What an actor he was...Occasionally when he'd come home, I would ask him, "Kaka, why don't you act anymore? You're so brilliant." He'd reply firmly. "No. I'll never act for other producers again." He hated to collect payment from people, to chase them for his money..... Kaka was also very fond of food, especially of amangshor jhol, a thin Bengali-style mutton curry, with maida puris. He loved the way Mummy cooked it, and she'd prepare it for him everytime he came here. When he came here after Mummy died, I had it especially made for him. He was very touched and said, "You remembered, Pallu." He also loved tiny bits of gobi (cauliflower). He'd say, "Cover me with mounds of fried gobi. I'll lie under them and keep eating the gobi. Even after I've finished it all, I'm sure I won't be satisfied!" Just two months ago I'd finished writing a script on Dad and another on Kaka. Thought it would be good for a documentary film. When I told Kaka about it, he asked me to call him on a certain date. When I did, he put Amit on the line, instead of speaking to me himself. I was quite exasperated because I was quite serious about it. It was a script written to show the sensitivity of the man. Now it is too late..... When I saw Kaka lying dead, covered with flowers, I couldn't think of it as real. The feeling I got was that he would suddenly get up, and true to his nature, stick his tongue out, cocking a snook at all of us, and say, "See what I've done to you guys!" I wish it had happened. ---------- Rajan [main hoon ek paagal premee mera dard na koi jaanaa] Parrikar

RMIM Archive Article "173".

Kishore Kumar sings for C. Ramchandra

Posted by: Ashok (ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org)

Author: Ashok Dhareshwar

Recently, Pradeep had expressed an interest in knowing about Kishore songs under the baton of C. Ramchandra. Here's what lit- tle I know. I suspect there isn't a whole lot more (although I would be happy to be proved wrong). The rarity of KK-CR combina- tion is surprising to say the least, given the flair for both the "comedic" and the tragic that the two artists displayed in their respective roles. It points up the lack of imagination on the part of the Bombay film makers, and that too, not for pursuing any artistic hobby-horse, but for expoiting what must surely have had tremendous commercial potential. Whatever little we have of these two unique artists is due almost exclusively to the vision of one film maker from Madras, MV Raman. who stayed with this combination through three (perhaps four) films. Interestingly, one of KK's earliest acting assignments was in a celebrated CR film: "Shehnai." I don't think KK has a song in the film, either sung by him or picturized on him. Either KK's sing- ing prowess wasn't yet evident (although by then he had sung in the chorus for Saraswati Devi at Bombay Talkies) or CR fancied his own singing too much to notice KK! I often try to imagine "aanaa meri jaan" sung by KK, Geeta, and Asha! Idle thoughts! Perhaps wrong also, because KK's earliest songs for Khemchand Prakash are quite sombre, almost Saigalish, e.g. "jagamag jagamag kartaa nikalaa" from Rimjhim ('49). As an aside, note that most of the films produced by Kishore were very serious. I"m afraid I have to start off on an uncertain footing. I don"t know the MD of credit, by song, for MV Raman"s "Ladki" ("53). The film has one rollicking Kishore song, written by Rajendra Krishan: shaadi (music: zshhh), shaadi (zshhhh) shaadi, shaadi, shaadi (zshhhh) ayyayyo haa, kismat ki baat hai, maalik ki hath hai (very fast) kismat ki baat, maalik ki hath, jeevan ka sath hai shaa~~~dee~~~~ The MDs for "Ladki" (which is a remake of Tamil "PeNN") are Dhaniram and R. Sudarshanam, with the collaboration of C. Ram- chandra. The Geeta Dutt song "baaT chalat nayi chunari rang Dhaari" is credited to the firs two MDs. According to Anil Hingorani, the Lata solo "sajanaa aa jaa, daras dikhaa jaa" is credited to CR and so is the Lata-Geeta duet "man more machaaye shor." I hope some nettor can pinpoint the MD for the above Kihore song, which must be one of his earliest humorous songs. The first film with Kishore as the leading man and CR as the MD was I think MV Raman's 'Pehli Jhalak' ('54). Vyjayanthimala was the heroine. As an aside, this film might be the first screen appearance of Dara Singh, who comes in for a bout with Om Prakash! The film had great music in all respects but one: it is a disappointment as far as KK the singer is concerned. I remember only one KK song from the film:

charan daas ko pine ki jo aadat na hoti to aaj miaa baahar bibi andar na soti It is a humorous song, with KK on a stage, imitating the voice of many different characters. The song ends with KK sounding almost like the Tuvan throat singers! Strange rhymes abound, e.g., shabaab-khabaab, bartan-ghan (Yes, it looks like Rajendra Krishan anticipated Gulzaar by more than q quarter century!) The only other Kishore piece is a brief parody of the Ladki song:

kismat ki baat, patton ke haath, pustak ko maat hai

paisaa! In sum, the KK output in "Pehli Jhalak" is of interest vocally, rather than musically! As was customary with CR films in the early-to-mid 1950s, the music for the film is dominated by spark- ling Lata gems, such as, kaise bhaaye sahi rut saawan hi piyaa ke bin patiyaa aawan ki and na maaro nazariyaa ke baan akeli aayi paniyaa bharana Interestingly, "Pehli Jhalak" has one of the earliest Asha songs for CR, a mujra number:
mohabbat ne mujhe maaraa, meri toba, meri toba Of course, I cannot go past "Pehli Jhalak" without

mentioning the great Hemant song from the film:

zamee.n chal rahi, aasamaa.n chal rahaa hai ye kis ke ishhare jahaa.n chal rahaa hai Next is "Asha "(1957), another Raman film, with the same cast and lyricist. We all know that it introduced scat singing into Hindi film music via the Kishore/Asha tandem "ina mina Dika." (scat, that is singing with nonsense words, became popular in jazz sing- ing in the early 30s. It is not really that easy to make up long strings of meaningless words! In the 'Asha' song a few KonkaNi words tumble in!). "Asha" had two other Kishore songs. One is a rather insipid affair with chorus: "ye insaaf kahaa.n ka hai." The other one is very nice, but went pretty much unnoticed, be- cause it was embedded in a long sequence of staged drama, full of many songlines and dialogue. The song is

haal tujhe apni duniya ki nazar to aataa hoga. As usual, there are an uncountable number of great Lata songs, particularly, chal chal re kanhaayi chhaliyaa naa doongi ab tore ye muraliyaa and tu na aaye hone lagi shaam re saanwariyaa, saanwariyaa An interesting feature of the music for the film is that Asha Bhonsle gets nearly an equal billing with Lata, singing for the leading lady. In addition to her share of "ina mina Dika", she has a very nice lori

so jaa re chandaa so jaa chandaniyaa araj kare Asha also shows up in the long drama sequence. The last of the KK-CR films produced by Raman was "Payal Ki Jhan- kaar" ("68). It starred Kishore and Rajashri. I don"t know the music of the film well, only that it featured a couple of "straight" songs by KK-CR combination (finally!). One is a KK/Asha tandem song:

ae mere soye hue pyar zaraa hosh mein aa ho chuki neend bahut jaag zaraa josh mein aa This one is so-so song, but the film does have my favorite song among the KK solos with CR: mukhaDe pe gesoo.n aa gaye aadhe idhar aadhe udhar (2) chanda pe baadal chhaa gaye aadhe idhar aadhe udhar (2) This song pairs Qamar Jalalabadi and C. Ramchandra. They had come together earlier in "Shabistan" ('51), which had a couple of other unusual features: Its MDs are CR and Madan Mohan! And it has quite a few duets by Talat and Geeta! To my knowledge, the only time CR and KK the playback singer have come together is for "Rootha Na Karo", one of the last CR films (1970). It was a Shashi-Nanda starrer, whcich went nowhere. The lyrics were by Hasrat Jaipuri (another occasion when Hasrat-CR came together was for a couple of Anarkali songs, including "mohabbat aisi dhaDkan hai", which Chetan had posted recently, with incorrect lyricist, courtesy Vividh Bharati!) Kishore sings the title song of "Rootha Na Karo"; it"s a mediocre song. I think the only song from the film that became very popular was the Rafi-Asha duet, "aap ka chehraa, maasha allaa". It"s a catchy tune, but a more or less direct lift from the western in- strumental "The Swinging Safari." To conclude, C. Ramchandra"s Kishore repertoire is limited. He did not explore many facets of Kishore"s singing in a workman- like fashion (happy song, sad song, duet, and so on ..) the way Chitragupta did in "Ek Raaz" and "Ganga Ki Lehren" and Shankar- Jaikishan did in "Shararat" and "Rungoli". More disappointingly, CR did not turn in any great melody involving Kishore as did oth- er great MDs in the limited opportunities they had to work with Kishore, e.g., Anil Biswas in "Fareb" (Kishore-Lata duet "aa mohabbat ki basti basaahenge ham" and "husn bhi hai udaas udaas"), Husnlal-Bhagatram in "Kafila" (Kishore-Lata duet "lehron se poochh lo"), Hemant Kumar in "Girl Friend" (Kishore-Sudha duet "kashti ka khamosh safar hai") or "Do Duni Char" ("hawaaon pe likh"), and OP Nayyar in "Naya Andaz" (Kishore-Shamshad duet "mere neendon mein tum"). Thus, it would appear that the only enduring Kishore legacy of CR is "ina mina Dika" (and perhaps the shaadi song from "Ladki.") Ashok

RMIM Archive Article "186".

Kishore Kumar Ganguly

Posted by: Joydeep Mitra[25] mitra@aecom.yu.edu

Author: Dinesh Raheja and Jitendra Kothari

Kishore Kumar Witty, Dramatic, He Was Hindi Films' Only Comic Hero

--------- When dust particles dance in the ray of light that bisects the darkened theatre and the screen lights up, a special communication is established between the moviegoer and the flickering images onscreen. And when the viewer becomes entranced with the shifting dynamics of the world before him, luminaries are born. It was on a wet day in July 1896, in a much smaller Mumbai with a population of barely 10 lakh people, that the screening of the first ever cinema show in India was held at Watson's Hotel. British officials and their memsahibs came to see this `marvel of the century' brought here by the Lumiere brothers barely six months after they had first exhibited their exciting invention in Paris. When the lights came on, even the pricey Re 1 seaters cheered and welcomed this new mass medium of entertainment. A 100 years later, in 1996, Mumbai is home to the largest film industry, in one of the biggest film producing nations in world. So what are the criteria that make a film personality a luminary? It is not necessarily talent or intelligence. It is not regional chauvinism - film people from all corners of the country efface their ethnic identity for the melting pot of films. It is a non-formulaic mix. But a trait that all these remarkable artistes share, like creative people everywhere, is a hypersensitivity to life. And the ability to interpret it for the rest of us. The legacies left by the lives of the older luminaries hold lessons for today's generation of stars. Many to the luminaries have had unfortunate ends to their rich lives bringing to mind Kipling's immortal lines:

This season's Daffodil,

She never hears What change,

what chance, what chill

Cut down last year's;

But with bold countinuance,

And knowledge small, Esteems her seven day continuance

To be perpetual No doubt the luminaries success has a life span like all things mortal. But what The Hundred Luminaries of Hindi Cinema seeks to immortalize are those moments on screen that are embedded in the audience's psyche-the moments in which they remain perennially alive. We are indebted to the luminaries because through their work, they have created a vicariously thrilling fantasy world and brought happiness to millions of Indians for whom even the ripped theatre seat is a pew from which they practice their religion of cinema. The Wizard of Odd marched to the tune of a different drummer. A multi-talented actor-singer, Kishore Kumar was notoriously eccentric in the manner of many a genius. At the height of the Emergency, he had the courage to defy the Indian government. Asked to perform free, he refused, and was consequently banned from national radio and television. Kishore had always been familiar with the vicissitudes of fate. While laughter was his leitmotif, it had to tide him over a lifetime that encompassed great highs and abysmal lows. At 18, Kishore started out as a singer despite not knowing even the rudiments of music. Abhas Kumar Ganguly

25Source: The Asian Age

changed his name to Kishore Kumar, left his native Khandwa and came to join Bombay Talkies where his elder brother (by 19 years), Ashok Kumar, held sway. But Kishore found few opportunities coming his way. He sang his first song, Marne ki duayen kyon mangu for Dev Anand in Ziddi (1948), did bit roles in several films and acted as the main lead in the eminently forgetable Andolan. After his marriage to Ruma Devi resulted in a split with his family, Kishore approached music director S.D. Burman for help and resulted in his singing Qusoor aapka in Bahaar. The song was a hit. From being a playback singer in Vyjanthimala's film, he became her hero in Ladki (1953). It was Kishore's uninhibited comic antics and spontaneous jocundity that, to a large extent, made Ladki a success. Kishore's amusingly askew view of life found favour with the audiences and he now had a flourishing acting career. The comic electricity he exuded simply lit up the screen as he sang, danced and acted in hits like New Delhi and Asha (Eena Meena Deeka). Also, he could now yodel better than the original yodeller, Danny Kaye. From King Lear's fool to Indian cinema's cretinous caricatures, the traditional concept of comedian has always been one of lowly stature, that of a sidekick. Kishore successfully challenged this image and mixing wit with drama and romance, became Hindi cinema's only major hero whose popularity relied mainly on comedy. Even a revered actress like Nargis was moved to name Kishore as her favourtie actress. This power-house of talent became so busy that he had no time to sing his own songs and Mohammed Rafi was called upon to playback for Kishore Kumar in the Ajab hai dastaan teri song form Shararat. After Chalti ka Naam Gaadi (1958), where Kishore and Madhubala made great foils for each other's foibles, Kishore's marriage to Ruma Devi disintegrated and he married the beautiful but doomed Madhubala. Taking Madhubala as his heroine, Kishore produced, directed, acted in, composed the music and wrote the lyrics for Jhumroo. The film, however, did poorly. His next film, Door Gagan Ki Chaon Mein, an uncharacteristically serious subject on the relationship between father and his dumb son, was acclaimed for its sensitivity. It led many to wonder if Kishore's talent would have survived even without regular infusions of laughter. Commercially, however, the Sixties saw a precipitous fall from grace for Kishore. Beset by tax problems, he was reduced to doing B grade films opposite starlet Kum Kum. Having earlier given up playback singing, he had to now accept the odd singing assignment in Dev Anand's Guide or Jewel Thief. Kishore's creative resuscitation came about with the incredible success of his songs in Aradhana. As the permanent of voice superstar Rajesh Khanna, Kishore nudged aside all competition. Thereafter, whether it was the flippant Rafta rafta or the grave Zindagi Ke safar mein, Kishore's range made him the uncrowned king of playback singers. As his fame grew, so did stories of his eccentricities. He put up a board outside his house saying, `This is a lunatic asylum'. He started having long conversations with the trees in his backyard, addressing each by a special name. He surprised everyone by making a songless film, Door Wadiyon Mein Kahin. He zipped through a short-lived marriage with Yogita Bali and then raised eyebrows by tying the knot for the fourth time with film star Leena Chandravarkar - who was only two years older than his son, Amit Kumar. Incidentally, he called all his four wives bandariyas (monkeys) since they all happened to be living in Bandra when they married him. Till the mid-eighties, Kishore retained his position at the top. His voice still pulsed with verve and exuberance at his many stage shows. But just when he was thinking of of retirement, he suffered setbacks in health and in 1987, he succumbed to major heart attack. Reportedly, his last words were "Kishore Kumar can die only in Khandwa. Long live Kishore Kumar." It was typical of Kishore to be unconventional, to the last. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "338".

Kishore lives on

Posted by: verma@cs.cornell.edu (Arun Verma[26])

Author: Biswhwanath Ghose

It was the evening of September 16, 1981. Kishore Kumar picked up his fourth Filmfare award as the best playback signer, this time for Hazar Rahen Mudke Dekhin from the Rajesh Khanna - starrer Thodisi Bewafai. For the next one hour, the top singer took the audience down memory lane, joined by son Amit Kumar. But Kishoreda's main offering of the evening was - no, not any of his own old hits - but a popular number of late colleague Mohammed Rafi, whom he held in high esteem. A gesture one rarely saw in the egotistical film industry! People called him eccentric. He called himself mad. But such was the greatness of Kishore Kumar. In Amit Kumar's words: "His life was an open book yet he was a misunderstood man. Ask Sunil Dutt, Dev Anand, Ashok Kumar, they will all tell you that his madness was cultivated, his eccentricities were a facade, perhaps it was the only way he could play - have fun with life." Kishore Kumar went on to bag three more Filmfare awards in a row and could have own more, had he not died on October 13, 1987. He was still singing when he died at the age of 58. Nine years later the country is yet to see, and perhaps will never see, a musical genius that Kishore Kumar was. A musical genius not because he happened to sing for almost all stars and almost all music directors (Naushad being a notable exception). Not because he happened to be the singer of some of the best sad solos and fun numbers, be it Zindagi ka Safar or Eena Meena Deeka. But because of the way he used the resonance in his voice to effortlessly put life into hundreds of compositions - not all memorable though - which made him the undisputed king of playback singing for ten long years from 1975 to 1985. Who else could have done it: The mellifluous rendering of Gulzar - R D Burman's Aane Wala Pal (Gol Mal) and Phir Wohi Raat Hai (Ghar). The devil - may - care tone in Kalyanji Anandji's Rote hue Aaten Hain Sab (Muqaddar Ka Sikander) and Apni to Jaise Taise (Laawaris). The comical note in Bappi Lahiri's Pag Ghungroo Baandh (Namak Halal) or the serenity in Manzilen Apni Jagah Hain (Sharaabi) or R D Burman's Saagar Kinare (Sagar). Each of the last three songs fetched Kishore Kumar at Filmfare award. As Bappi Lahiri once said: "When he sang, he pronounced each and every word clearly." And nobody knows better then Bappi, who owes all the hits under his belt till date - whether from Chalte Chalte to the more recent Namak Halal and Jeetendra - starrers like Himmatwala - to the great singer. And it is not just Bappi Lahiri. The careers of several other top music directors peaked when Kishore Kumar was singing for them. Like Kalyanji Anandji. During the recording of Mera Jeevan Kora Kagaz, Kalyanji was so moved by the song that he was in tears. Then there is Raajesh Roshan, whose Chhukar Mere Man Ko (Yaarana) is still remembered as Kishoreda's one of the best songs, and to some extent Laxmikant Pyarelal (remember My Name is Anthony Gonsalves and Om Shanti Om?!). R D Burman and father S D Burman, of course, rarely worked without Kishore Kumar. Even maestros - turned - music directors Shiv - Hari are best known for their Dekha Ek Khwab from Silsila. And what about the hundreds of not - so - memorable melodious numbers contained in LP records or cassettes gathering dust in music shops. Even a critic of Kishore Kumar has to appreciate songs like Mere Liye Soona Soona (Anand Aur Anand), Jeene Ko To Jeeten Hain Sabhi, Aisa Kabhi Hua Nahin (Yeh Vaada Raha) and Dilbar Mere (Satte Pe Satta). Then there was a mesmerising number Main Dil Tu Dhadkan from the film Adhikar. The film, with Rajesh Khanna in the cast, failed to take off and so did the song. But the singer had given it his best shot. Kishore Kumar, as a singer, is still alive. One just has to switch on the FM radio set to find that he is there, everywhere. He can never die. But with his death, the country definitely lost an entertainer. Gone are the days of the nites, when the versatile singer enthralled the audience for hours, often along with his son and somethings with his favourite music director R D. And what an entertainer he was. In 1978, Kishoreda was

26Source: Asian Age

in Delhi to sing for the West Bengal flood relief fund. The venue was Rabindra Rangshala and he had just finished with his first song Mana Janab Ne Pukara Nahin when it started raining heavily. The audience panicked and so did the musicians, but not Kishore Kumar. "You have paid to hear me sing and so I will," the singer announced before going on to belt out another 15 numbers, standing drenched in between the crowd. Even the Filmfare award functions are no more the same without Kishore Kumar. No more is the award - winning music director's orchestra seen on the stage and no more does the award - winning singer perform. Many may still remember in 1984 Filmfare awards presentation ceremony at Shanmukhananda Hall in Bombay. Bappi Lahiri, who had won the best music director award for Sharabi, was present with full orchestra in attendance. He began the evening with Aana Jaana Laga Rahega from Geraftaar. The music director then called Anil Kapoor and both sang Yaar Bina Chain Kahaan Re (Saaheb). Finally, to a thunderous applause, Kishore Kumar walked on to the stage and started with then - popular De De Pyar De. The singing and the dancing over, the singer said: "Ab main woh gaana gaane ja raha hoon jiske liye aapne mujhe award diya hai. Thoda serious ho lein." And adjusting his fur cap and spectacles, he gave what was perhaps his most heart - rending performance ever, singing an equally heart - rending song, Manzilen Apni Jagah Hain, Raaste Apni Jagah Hain. The mellow mood that had overcome the audience then climaxed with the rendering of the evergreen Chalte Chalte Mere Yeh Geet Yaad Rakhna ...That was Kishore Kumar's style. But it was playback singing that really suffered with his death. No singer other than him has ever been able to match his voice with that of the "singer" on the screen. When he sang for Amitabh Bachchan, the audience was "convinced" that it was Amitabh who was singing. Imagine anyone else singing Pag Ghungroo Baandh or My Name Is Anthony Gonsalves for Amitabh! Same was the case with all actors he sang for, from Dev Anand to Dharmendra and of course, Rajesh Khanna. All of them owe much of their success to him. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "340".

Kishore Kumar - Eccentric genius

Posted by: verma@cs.cornell.edu (Arun Verma[27])

Author: Pardyot Lal

In an age which makes and breaks icons every minute, let us talk of a real icon for a change: Kishore Kumar. That he was an eccentric genius, a procession of men rolled into one and so on has already been mythologised. The point that almost a decade after his death, his absence is still felt, is tantamount to wasting precious newsprint on a cliche. But all said and done, the man was a genius. A richly melodious voice, and an impressive range marked him out early enough as a singer of extraordinary talent. But even as an actor, Kishore Kumar was really very good when he was good. Take Padosan, where KK plays the role of an itinerant singing ustad who is also very clever indeed. In any dispassionate discussion on all - time great performances, Kishore Kumar in Padosan will certainly figure high on the list. Everything about him in Padosan will certainly figure high on the list. Everything about him in Padosan was perfect. The timing was absolutely uncanny, and Kishore Kumar gave just the right interpretation to the role of a paan chewing, fun - loving ustad. Remember the scene where Kishore first tries to give elementary lessons in sur to Sunil Dutt? That was memorable stuff. He got into the spirit of a very - well scripted role, and with Mehmood too chipping in with a brilliant portrayal of a Carnatic - style music guru, Padosan was a delight to watch. Kishore Kumar simply outplayed (or outsang) Manna Dey in Ik chatur naar badi hoshiyaar, and there also was that other great number - meri pyaari Bindu. Some of the some attributes - like perfect timing combined with a sense of rhythm - were very much in evidence in that great musical comedy, Chalti Ka Naam Gaadi. Playing a sex - starved mechanic who falls head - overheels for rich girl Madhubala, Kishore Kumar was simply terrific. There is no doubt that he carried the film on his shoulders, even when his two brothers and wife - to - be were also very good in their poles. But Kishore was the key figure around whom this cute little tale revolved. And Burmanda reserved some of his best music for this Kishore Kumar production - songs such as Ik Ladki bheegi bhaagi si; Paanch rupaiyya barah aana; Haal kaisa hai janab ka and Jaate the Japan pahunch gaye cheen samajh gaye na. We have it on the authority of Ashok Kumar that Kishore was more than partly responsible for the final shape of the compositions, suggesting changes, improvising and even composing some of the songs himself. There was a zing, a certain magic to the Kishore - Madhubala pair. Take Half - Ticket, perhaps the zaniest comedy of all time. Kishore, oversized half - pants and all, is great in this film which had perhaps the thinnest story - line ever. Kishore is in fact a riot in Half Ticket, and his jugalbandi with Pran (surprisingly good in the film) has an impeccable touch. Kishore's dim - wit act on the screen is an all - time classic, and unlike, say Mehmood, his comedy never degenerated into vulgarity or double entendres. The problem with Kishore seems to have been lack of concentration, because outside these three films, he never really managed to give a consistently good performance. Yes, he was funny in parts in films like Baap re Baap, Dill Ka Thug, Pyaar kiye Jaa, Jhumroo, Badhti ka naam Dadhi and so on, but only in parts. He often decided to play the clown, when he did not need to do that, given his talent. Maybe, the lack of consistency was a result of being much too involved in various aspects of film - making to really excel in one. He went from Khandwa to Bombay to become a singer; elder brother Ashok Kumar was one of the presiding deities at Bombay Talkies. While Khemchand Prakash gave Kishore his first break as a singer, Ashok Kumar and Shahid Lateef literally forced him to act out a one minute role in Ziddi. This was the film where the Kishore Kumar - Dev Anand combination was first forged. As a singer, in films such as Funtoosh, Paying Guest, Munimji and others, Kishore quickly established his mettle. But given the fact that the films he acted turned out to be hits as well sort of divided his attention. In fact, Kishore himself was not exaggerating at all when he said that in the Fifties, he was the biggest box - office

27Source: Asian Age

draw after Dilip Kumar. Kishore was the first real comedian - hero. In Mohan Sehgal's New Delhi (which had songs like Nakhre waali and Are bhai nikal ke aa ghar se), the full range of Kishore is on display - as a singer, dancer (matching movements with none other than Vyjantimala) and of course, comedian. In fact, Mohan Sehgal used him particularly effectively in Adhikaar, in which Kishore was pitted against that splendid actress called Usha Kiran, was not a bad film at all, and Apna Haath Jagannath (again, great music by S D Burman, especially the duet Tum jahaan jahaan, hum wahaan wahaan) had its moments. But all said and done, he was never fully utilised. In fact, even when Kishore himself wielded the megaphone, the results were not always memorable. While Door Gagan ki Chhaon Mein was a visual (and musical) delight with a nice storyline, Door ka Raahi was not in the same league. Shaabash Daddy had a fantastic idea - a 50 year old man falling for a girl half his age when his son is of marriageable age - it also had some very interesting locales and directorial touches, but still, there was something missing. The less said about Door Waadiyon Mein Kahin the better, for it was an unmitigated disaster. Badhti Ka naam Dadhi had all the makings of an entertainer, but again, Kishore could not really deliver. What a great plotline it had - an eccentric Parsi seth announces that he will marry his pretty secretary to the guy who has the longest beard in the world. Kishore made K N Singh dance near the beach, and that was a great scene. The climax, shot on the pattern of a Western (only, the warriors, Kishore and K N Singh, have scissors, not bayonets in their hands!) was also very interesting. But perhaps the anxiety to blood son Amit got the better of Kishore, the director. One less celebrated aspect of the Kishore Kumar saga was his felicity as a music director. Door Gagan ki Chhaon Mein had songs like Koi lautade mere beete hue din; Jin raaton ki bhor nahin hai and Aa chal ke tujhe maen lake chaloon; Jhumroo had Thandi hawa yeh chaandni suhani; Koi humdum na raha; babu aana, Sunte Jaana; matwale hum and so on. Door ka Raahi had beqarar - dil to gaae jaa; Panthi hoon maen us path ka and Yeh khushi do ghadi ki among other numbers. Except for a film called Zameen Aasmaan, Kishore never scored music for any "outside" production, which is nothing short of a tragedy. The proliferating Kishore Kumar clones are in their own way paying a great tribute to the man from Khandwa, who was a real genius. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "11".

Asha Bhosle

Posted by: "Rajan P. Parrikar[28]" (parrikar@mimicad.Colorado.EDU)

By Raju Bharatan

----- Yeh Hai Asha was the name of the personality test programme that Asha Bhonsle devised for herself in the wake of Runa Laila's in- vasion of India, some 18 years back. With her telegenic personal- ity, Runa Laila swept Indian viewers off their feet. Her singing-swinging presence was something sensationally new for In- dian viewers. It made both Asha and Lata, with that notebook a mental crutch in their hands, think again. It took Lata time to overcome the trau- ma of Runa and acquire a different kind of stage presence. But Asha adjusted swiftly. Asha instictively realised that, with the advance of TV in India, suppleness of throat had to be matched by suppleness of limb. The outcome was Yeh Hai Asha. It had taken Asha the best part of 30 years to do it. For decades she had laboured under the concept that she was the lesser singer because she was the lesser sister. But today she has divined the true range and sweep of her own vo- cals. Today she knows she has her own audience, distinct from Lata's. O P Nayyar it was who brought Asha out of the Lata sha- dow. R D Burman then made Asha the harbinger of a new trend. There were some inevitable strains in the Asha-RD relationship as Bappi Lahiri arrived as the new hit-maker. Inevitably Asha, as our most flexible voice on record, came to serve this new wave composer too, even though it was R D Burman that Bappi Lahiri was challenging. The development cramped RD's style for a while. But soon RD realised that, after a quarter century in films, his po- sition was bound to be questioned. Therefore RD assessed himself afresh. And the outcome was a rhythmic reunion with Asha in the shape of Dil Padosi Hai. What is it about Asha that makes her the ready choice of com- posers old and new? From OP to RD to Bappi she has kept hectic vocal pace. Naushad, for instance, told me something amazing not too long ago. "You know, " he said, "Asha is Lata's match at last in almost every respect." "But wasn't it yourself," I rem- inded him, "who once said jo baat Lata mein hai woh Asha mein nahi hai." "So I did," agreed Naushad, "but maybe at that time, I had a closed ear on Asha. Just as I had a closed ear on Kishore Kumar too. It was only when I condescended, after 30 years or so, to record an Asha- Kishore duet for Sunhera Sansar that I dis- cerned how intelligent and quick to grasp Kishore was. [If only Naushad-Sahab had asked me earlier!:-) - RP] This is Asha's strength too. Teach her just once and she even improves on what you have composed!" The very fact that she should have induced such rethinking in a vintage music director like Naushad is a measure of Asha's phenomenal advance. It has to be accepted as a settled fact that Asha is the most versatile voice among our female singers - like Mohammad Rafi was among our male singers. [Bharatan-Sahab, what do we have to do to convince you that Kishore was as versatile, if not more, as Rafi? Eh?:-) - RP] After all, there is nothing that Asha can do for R D Burman today that she could not do equally well for his father, S D Burman too. If SD wanted a singer to give breath-taking expression to a Jewel Thief heart stealer like Raat akeli hai, he could find one, and only one singer, Asha, to do the job for him. By the same to- ken, if RD created something so contemporary for Hare Krishna Hare Rama like Dum maro dum, he could get that final sense of wow expression only from Asha. Whether the number be Dum maro dum or Mera naam hai Shabnam (from Kati Patang), the sum-total of the impression you carry is that none but Asha Bhonsle could have given it the final vocal stamp it acquired. In choosing her Ten Bests recently, Asha named RD's O mere Sona re Sona re Sona re (from Teesri Manzil) as one of her great favourites. O mere Sona re Sona re Sona re is important because Teesri Manzil (1966) was the film with which the hep Asha-RD tuning began. Originally O P Nayyar was to have composed the music for Teesri Manzil. The two together, Asha and OP, would have produced, of course, as thematic a score for Teesri Manzil as Asha and RD fi- nally did. For these are the two music directors (OP and RD) for whom Asha always reserved something special. No relationship lasts for ever, of course, so that,

28Source: The Illustrated Weekly of India, Sept 4-10, 93

like all good things, the Asha-OP tuning too came to an end. But not before OP had created for Asha such evergreen numbers to put over as Piya piya na lage mora jiya (Phagun), Chhota sa baalama (Raagini), Puchhon na humen hum unke liye (Mitti me Sona), Woh hans ke mile humse (Baharen Phir Bhi Aayengi), Yehi woh jagah hai yehi woh fizaayen (Yeh Raat Phir Na Aayegi), Phir thes lagi dil ko (Kash- mir ki kali), Tum ko karodon saal huye (Sambandh), and never least, Chain se humko kabhi aap ne jeene na diya (Pran Jaye Par Vachan Na Jaye). It was after her musically beautiful relationship with O P Nayyar came to end [coinciding with the end of her personal relationship with OP - RP] that Asha turned to R D Burman as the new trend- setter. yet only the trend-setters have changed today. The voice of Asha Bhonsle remains uniquely constant, no matter what be the composing identity of the man making the music. The music Asha made with O P Nayyar merits special mention only because this was the lone composer for whom Asha was number one from the word go. OP never used the voice of Lata in his life, for him the choice of female voice, by 1956, began and ended with Asha Bhonsle. RD was different, it took him some years to realise that he had tp create a music that was pre-eminently his own if he was to break away from the banyan-tree shadow of his father, S D Burman. Until he realised that he had to be so radically different, RD too settled for Lata as his main female voice, bringing in Asha only for foot-tapping numbers. But once he made a clean break from SD it was Asha who gave RD his new Voice-of-Youth identity as a composer. Even while hearing Asha and RD zoom together, even while awaken- ing to Asha's emergence as a freewheeler-singer nonpareil, always remember that Asha's voice is, and was, all things to all com-posers. The remarkable thing about Asha's vocalising is that she is an entirely self-made singer who has made her own way to the top in the face of vintage composer dismissing her as not a patch on Lata. Even S D Burman, whose main female voice Asha was for six years (1957 tp 1963), ditched her - after all that she had sung for him - when he saw an opportunity to make up with Lata with Bandini. This was the film in which SD, even while asking Asha to pour her heart and soul into the rendition of Ab ke baras bhej bhaiya ko babul, was quietly, behind Asha's back, making up with Lata (with whom he had fallen out) and getting the Mangeshkar to put over Jogi jab se tu aaya mere dwaare for the same Bandini! A less determined woman would have given up the fight in the face of such sustained discrimination. But Asha never said die. And finally found acceptance in the highest quarters when a confirmed Lata-buff like Khayyam chose her to sing all those lovely ghazals on Rekha playing Umrao Jaan. And what virtuosity Asha brought to Umrao Jaan ghazals ranging from Dil cheez kya hai to In aankhon ki masti to Justju jiski thi to Yeh kya jageh hai doston. Umrao Jaan only confirmed what Naushad admitted only later - that Asha was every bit as original a singer as Lata. It is not as though Asha, early on, did not give splendid results when performing for composers who were mentally committed to Lata. If it is proof of her artistry under such pro-Lata com- posers you want, you have it in Madan Mohan's Ashkon se teri hum ne (Dekh Kabira Roya), Anil Biswas's Dil shaam se dooba jaata hai (Sanskar), Naushad's Radha ke pyare Krishna Kanhai (Amar), Sajjad's Tere jahan se chal diye (Rukhsana), C Ramchandra's Shama par jalke bhi parwaana pana hota nahin (Meenaar), S D Burman's Tasveeren banti hai taqdeeren banti hai (Jeevan Jyoti), Deepak se deepak jal gaye (Anjali), Shanker-Jaikishan's Haay saawan ban gaye nain (Krorepati) and Salil Chowdhury's Baag mein kali khili (Chaand Aur Suraj). I have studiedly made these Asha selections from the era in which the composers identified above vibed first and last with Lata. My idea in presenting such a selection is to draw pointed attention to the fact that had these Lata-lorn composers but cared to take the trouble, they could have tapped in Asha, a throat of equal potential. But they just would not care to give Asha a fair hear- ing those days, so that this phenomenal singer had to finally make it all on her own - by the long hard road.

RMIM Archive Article "12".

Asha: A VOICE FOR ALL SEASONS

Posted by: Gopal N Kondagunta[29] (gkondagu@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu)

Author: Girija Rajendran

It was as Umrao Jaan that Rekha emerged as the total woman. And it was as the sensuously sensitive voice of Umrao Jaan Rekha that Asha emerged as the total singer. "Dil cheez kya hai", "In aan- khon ke masti", "Justju jis ki thi" and "Yeh kya jagah hai dos- ton" - these superbly crafted ghazals, going on Rekha, put the stamp on Asha as a performer supple-throated enough by 1981, to create her own impact even under the baton of a confirmed Lata votary such as Khayyam. "When Khayyam lowered my pitch by half a note for 'Umrao Jaan'" says Asha, "frankly i was sceptical about the results. But I have always believed that the composer calls the tune, so I sang just as Khayyam wanted me to do. Imagine my surprise therefore when he finally played back to me 'Yeh kya jageh hai doston'. I just could not believe, so fresh-sounding was the end result. After that, I just put myself in Khayyam's custody and the outcome was the Rekha you came to hear and experience as 'Umrao Jaan.'" It was like virtuosity that Asha brought to the rendition of 'Mera Kuchch saamaan tumhaare paas pada hai', the R.D. Burman composition for Gulzar's 'Ijaazat' that won her the National Award as Best Singer. At this point, there were quite a few who felt that Asha was not just Lata's peer, but had forged ahead of her. It had taken Asha the best part of 35 years to do it, for decades she had laboured under the complex that she was the lesser singer, because she was the lesser sister. O.P. Nayyar, the composer who first gave Asha her own distinct performing identity, has a revealing happening to narrate here. "Asha and Lata staying in opposite flats at Bombay's Pedder Road, shared a common maidservant." says Nayyar."Now this maidservent had merely to come and tell the younger sister that Lata had just recorded something wonderful for Asha to lose her vocal poise. Such was her Lata phobia that it took me some months to convince Asha that she had a voice individualistic enough to evolve a singing style all of he r own. It took some doing, but I finally managed to bring Asha out of her fixation. The two Asha and O.P. Nayyar, certainly made memorable music. 'Jaadoogar sanwariya' ("Dhake ki Malmal"), 'Chhota sa baalama'("Raagini"), 'Puchchon na humen hum unke liye'("Mitti Men Sona"), 'Aankhon se jo uttari hai dil mein' ("Phir Wohi Dil Laya Hoon"), 'Bekasi hadse jab guzar jaaye'("Kalpana"),'Akeli hoon main piya aa aa aa'("Sambandh") and last but never the least, 'Chainse hum ko kabhi'("Pran Jaye Par Vachan Na Jaye") are but some of the Nayyar nuggets that rank as musical landmarks in Asha's life. Even the 'Dum maaro dum' effect that Asha went on to achieve, under the baton of R.D. Burman, could not erase the sultry-sirenish garb in which Nayyar had presented her, on Mum- taz, as 'Yeh hi reshmi zulfon ka andhera' ("Mera Sanam'). Why is so much made of the Asha-O.P. tuning when she gave number after number to remember under S.B. Burman, too, in the same era? Because Nayyar was the one and only composer for whom there was no Lata, only Asha. By contrast, Dada Burman, even while getting Asha to put her all she had into 'Ab ke baras bhej bhaiyya', had turned, in the same 'Bandini' back to Lata with 'Jogi jab se tu aaya mere dwaare'! "It was O.P. Nayyar," says Asha "who taught me how to use effec- tively the bass in my voice, while from Dada Burman I learnt the each and every emotion,in a song. " If that sounds as though Asha learnt more from S.D. than from O.P., let it pass. The Asha-O.P. parting, remember, was bitter, so that she may have hesitated to give Nayyar his due. Dada Burman, for his part, praised Asha generously for her But Asha, it is pertinent to recall, had displayed similar fantastic breath control, full ten years earlier, while putting over 'Aayiye Meherbaan' for Nayyar in "Howrah Bridge." Yes it is the same "Howrah Bridge" in which Geeta Dutt left such a telling ef- fect through 'Mera naam Chin-Chin-Choo'! Asha those days, even while being eternally compared to Lata, had simultaneously to fight for the slot already occupied by Geeta. So is it any wonder that Asha rates Nayyar's It is next important to remember that, even as O.P. Nayyar and S.D. Burman vied with each other to exploit Asha's

29Source: The Hindu

vocals to the hilt, she remained second choice with all other composers who mattered in 1951-60, the golden decade of Hindustani film music. It is not as though, in this determinant decade, Asha did not give splendid results under composers mentally commited to Lata. If it is a proof of Asha's artistry under such pro-Lata composers that you want, you have it in Madan Mohan's 'Ashkon se teri hum ne' ("Dekh Kabira Roya"), Anil Biswas's 'Dil shaam se dooba jaata hai'("Sanskar"), Naushad's 'Ek baat kahun mere piya'("Amar"), Sajjad's 'Tere jahaan se chal diye'("Rukhsana"), C. Rama-c handra's 'So jaa rechanda so jaa' ("Aasha"), S.D. Burman's 'Tasveeren banti hain taqdeeren banti hain'("Jeevan Jyoti"), Jaidev's 'Deepak se deepak jal gaye'("Anjali") and Salil Chowdary's 'Thandi thandi pawan ki phuhaar'("Jaagte Raho"). The idea in making these Asha selections from the decade in which the com- posers identified above vibed, first and last, with Lata is to draw pointed attention to the fact that had these Lata-lorn composers but cared to take the trouble, they could have tapped, in Asha, a throat of equal potential. But these master composers just would not care to give Asha a fair hearing those days, so this spirited performer had finally to make it on her own by the long hard road. Today therefore, if Asha is able to keep resonant pace with Boy George and Ghulam Ali alike, it is because she is now her own singing woman. O.P. Nayyar and S.D. Burman might have shown her the way, R.D. Burman might have given her vocals a mod 'Mera naam hai Shabnam' turn but, in the end, the fact remains that it was on her own steam that Asha emerged, against all odds, as a free- wheeler singer who was all things to all composers. The remark- able aspect of Asha's vocalising is that she made it to the top in the face of vintage composer after vintage composer dismissing her as not a patch on Lata. Even Hansraj Behl, after having re- jected Lata's voice as 'tinny' and acknowledging Asha as the sis- ter with greater potential, was to return to Lata once the latter made sensationally good. Life early on was thus one long heartbreak for Asha. A less determined woman would have given up the fight in the face of such sustained discrimination. But Asha never said die. And fi- nally carved a niche for herself that saw even a Lata addict like Salil Chowdary come to her for 'Baagh mein kali khili' (Chand aur Suraj"). Today Asha has done everything Lata has done - at least in films. Nobody doubts her prowess anymore. In fact, such is her reasoning that the new line of composers shy away from her, diffident about creating something truly worth- while for her to render. But Asha is past caring now. The struggle to there has been so exhausting that she now works on her terms alone. Very likely, she is at a stage where she has outgrown films. Today she works increasingly on those more demanding non-film albums. Asha genuinely feels that the new voices fail to offer the kind of competition calcu- lated to draw the best out of her. "You just cannot imagine the kind of challenge it was to sing with, for instance, Kishore Kumar, " says Asha. "With this amaz- ingly natural performer, you had, all the time, to watch out for some stratagem or other at the very last minute . Kishore was such a spontaneous and innovative performer that i had to be on my guard always. Yet Kishore always used to say that I was his match at the mike. I particularly remember, from 'Nau Do Gyaarah' Dada Burman's "Aankhon mein kya ji" in which i barely managed to keep pace with Kishore. "As for Lata, I would suddenly discover that she had taken the duet we were singing together to a crescendo that put me on my mettle. Here too i had to be extra watchful, since Lata habitual- ly held her notebook in her right hand, I in my left hand! This meant Lata had her face away from me at the outset itself - some- thing that made it all the more difficult to 'anticipate' a note-stealer like her! Still I think I copied, judge for yourself from our harmonious duets together, like Shankar-Jaikishan's 'Yeh barkha bahaar sautanya ke dwaar' ("Mayurpankh"), C.Ramachandra's 'O chaand jahaan woh jaaye'("Sharada") and Madan Mohan's 'Jab Jab tumhe bulaaya' ("Jahanara"). Like Lata, Asha is humility personified. Like Lata, she has the gift of making even a classicaly oriented number sound lucid enough for the lay liste- ner to hum. From "Gunga Jumna," Naushad's 'Tora man bada paapi' in Khamaj, from "Kaajal", Ravi's 'Tora man darpan kehlaaye' in Jaunpuri, from "Lal Patthar', S.J.'s 'sooni sooni sans ke sitar par' in Jaijaiwanti, from "Prarthana", Hrida- yanath Mangeshkar's 'O baanwri' in Purya Dhanasri, from 'Maya Macchindra", Govind-Naresh's 'Chhalak rahi boonden' in Bageshri, from "Saranga", Sardar Malik's 'Chali re chali main to' in Des- these are numbers which prove that, no matter what the status of the composer, Asha unfailingly displayed the knack by which the raga-based tune got positively across to the audience. Here then is a performer who has turned the business of popular singing into a near art-form. Asha Bhosle must justly rate as our most flexible voice on record. Her

potential,in truth, was al- ready translating itself into existing performance even as we posed the question: 'After Lata, who?' Why then does Asha Bhosle seem to have lost out in films today, when she is at the peak of her vocal powers? Asha has lost out for the same reason that S. Janaki is to be heard less and less today - for concentrating on the style of songs that come ulti- mately to be taken for granted. With the plum tunes going to Lata in Asha's formative years, with Geeta cornering what remained of the ligh-veined numbers, Asha was rarely offered the luxury of choice. She had to sing whatever came her way("Remember, i was still in my teens when i became the bread winner in the Bhosle family and had to keep the home fires burning.") Significantly, Asha has sung more songs than Lata in the 1951-60 decade in which Lata swept aside all competition to make her mark as a "tuneful symbol of national integration." Since their careers ran paralle, the focus always remained on Lata. Yet it was none other than Naushad who said to me the other day: "You know, Asha is Lata's match in every respect." Astonished, i rem- inded Naushad:"But was it not you yourself who told me some years back, when i asked you to sum up the essential difference between the two sisters, that Asha lacks certain something which Lata, and Lata alone has?" "Maybe i said that then,"replied Naushad."Maybe i said it because i then had a closed ear on Asha." But why only Naushad, a whole generation of composers, a whole generation of listeners, had a closed ear on Asha, did they not? The Lata effect was such that Asha had to fight a grim rearguard action for a decade and a half. It is something that must, there- fore, rebound to Asha's eternal credit that she was able, ulti- mately, to create an Asha effect that stood out as something dis- tinct even while Lata continued to hold untrammelled sway. Now, in 1990, Asha is no less a phenomenon than Lata. Asha's re- pertoire, more varied than Lata, speaks for itself. In that classy "Utsav" duet scored by Laxmikant-Pyarelal, for instance, you discern that Asha is on an equal footing with Lata as she chips in with:"Bela mehka re mehka aadhi raat ko". The two, Asha and Lata, have been performing contemporaries for full 40 years now. Through those two score years, if Lata brooks no equality, the truth is that Asha, too admits no superiority. At long last, Asha's impact is her very own, if Lata is Lata, so is Asha Asha.

RMIM Archive Article "192".

Asha's Filmfare Interview. (excerpts)

Posted by: iakhan@eesun2.tamu.edu (Ikram Ahmed Khan[30])

Author: Khalid Mohamed

Filmfare had an interview with Asha on the occasion of her receiving a special Filmfare award. She was interviewed by Khalid Mohamed.

Since I would like to avoid being bawled out for infringeing copyright I have the interview written down in a different format. I have grouped together the related topics and put them together. *Hopefully*, this means that I've not done anything bad. In any case, the intention was to share with fellow rmim-ers some knowledge about a great favorite of most rmim-ers.

Comments in curly braces are my own. So are the typos. Any facts that I may present are accurate to my knowledge. But then how much do I really know?? :)

Asha has received several filmfare awards for her singing.
In 1960 the first award was instituted for playback singers. Males and females competed in a single category. This continued until '68 when separate categories were made for males and females. Asha won it for the first time in '68, she is truly the first female playback singer to win the Filmfare Award (:)). Lata has won only 3 awards, last being in 1970. Sharda won it in 1971 with the other competing songs being Lata's Bindiya Chamkegi[Do Raaste] and Babul Pyare[Johny mera naam].

Asha won 7 filmfare awards -

1968	Garibon ki suno	Dus Laakh.
1969	Parde meN rehne do	Shikar
1972	Piya tu ab toh aaja	Caravan
1973	Dum maaro dum	Hare Rama Hare Krishna
1974	Hone lagi hai raar jawaN	Naina
1975	Chain se humko kabhi	Pran jaaye par vachan na jaaye
1979	Yeh mera dil	Don

And since you would now like to hear from Asha, let me scramble out of the away quickly. I introduce you to Asha, "the absoloot queen of Indian pop music" {as referred in an ad for Raful & I}

Later,
Ikram.

---

30 Source: Filmfare

ps. I never knew that about Ae mere watan ke logoN!

ASHA'S SPECIAL FILMFARE AWARD INTERVIEW
==========

{ KavitaK won the female playback singer for Mera piya ghar aaya. Asha won a special award for Rangeela. }

Affected by the death of her mother.

~~~~~~

I'd like to start by saying that I used to inform my mother about every little thing that happened to me. If she couldn't hear what I was saying, I would write down what I had to say on a piece of paper for her. I would pour my heart out to her during the time when I didn't have much work.. and she would very sweetly say "Asha, there is no one else like you... there isn't even any heroine who can be like you".

Maybe some people will say that I', making up things or that I'm sounding very dramatic, but six to seven days before my mother passed away last year, she took one look at me and laughed a lot. She said that I should never worry, that God would always be with me.

In 1996.

~~~~~~~~

Some months later, I was in San Fransisco where I had gone to cut a record [Legacy] with the great Ali Akbar Khan saheb. And I started getting numerous phone calls, informing that my songs of Rangeela had become extremely popular. 'Tanha Tanha' had started topping the charts.

It was almost as if what my mother had said had come true. It's because of what my mother and my father made me believe in ; in honesty and straight-talk, that I'm still here after a career spanning 52 years. Imagine I've won the Filmfare Award at the age of 62. I am sure it is because of the aashirwad of God and my parents.Lata didi had their aashirwaad too.

On the self-imposed retirement from the Filmfare Award.

~~~~~~

Why? Because the Filmfare awards would mostly go to didi, Rafi,KK and me. New female singers who were coming in were missing out on the awards.Moreoveroften I would feel that an award-winning song is the result of teamwork. It would be written well and composed well. I would feel that it was unjust for me to walk away with all the credit and the the trophy.

To cite a specific instance, I got the award for 'Garibon ki suno' [Dus Laakh] but neither Rafi sahab or Ravi were awarded for this song. Similarly, I got the trophy for 'Chain se humko kabhi' [Pran Jaaye par Vachan Na Jaye] but OP Nayyarsahab didn't. I won for 'Piya tu ab to aaja' [Caravan] and 'Dum maaro Dum' [Hare Rama Hare Krishna] But RD Burman didn't. I was honoured for 'Yeh mera dil pyaar ka deewana' [Don] but Kalyanji-Anandji weren't.

I don't feel like returning to the Awards. Why should I? Now that I've received the Special Award, why should I want more? *smile* And this special trophy is so pretty.

{ Note: 1968 - AB wins for Garibon ki suno Best Male playback- MKaps for Neele gagan ke tale Best Music- LP for Milan

1975 - Ab wins for Chain se humko kabhi Best Music - KA for Kora Kaghaz 1972 & '73 - AB wins for Piya tu and Dum maaro Best Music - SJ for Mera naam joker and Be-imaan resp.

1979 - AB wins for Yeh mera dil Best Music - LP for SSSundaram }

Her relationship with Lata

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

I don't know anything {about the so-called love-hate nature} except that ours is a blood relationship which can never be altered. When I am ill, she is by my side and vice versa. When we meet, we don't discuss the music business at all.

She's older than me by four years. I give her the izzat that is due an elder sister. I touch her feet ..... and at times I ever press her feet before she goes to sleep at night because I know she enjoys that very much.

I don't think much should be made about who is the No. 1 and who

is the No. 2 between us. In classical music, if you say Bade Ghulam Ali Khan is No. 1, then would you say that Amir Khan, Vilayat Khan, Annapurnaji or Ravi Shankar are No. 2? Why tag us with numbers? It's wrong... such things are brought up only by those who want to create a rift between us. But let me tell you that they'll never succeed.

In fact, I'm very proud of the fact that we are a complete family of singers. My brother (Hridaynath) and my other sisters (Usha and Meena) are also singers. Where else would you find such a family?

Perceived Injustices

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Injustice? *laugh* Lekin us meN bhi mazaa aata hai.

There was a time when I would feel angry, very angry. I would want to explode - yeh boloon ke woh boloon? There were attempts to set up obstacles in my way. I wouldn't be given the best songs, only the secondary one. Yet, I was loved by the public. I won my share of the awards, too, despite everything. If I'd won them easily, then there would have been no sense of achievement.

Anyway, right to this day the injustice persists. But then out of the blue, something providential happens to me, something willed by God. Otherwise, why should A. R. Rahman have given me songs? I must have done something good in life to deserve them.

{ Note: High praise for ARR, huh? But it's not like she is going overboard. In another interview, she has said that he must have heard my songs as he was growing up. He must have felt like using her voice at some point too. I thought that there was a hint of justifiable pride in these words. }

Youthful voice and love for singing.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Everyone asks me, "what do you do to keep your voice the way it is?". And I say nothing, nothing at all. I eat the same food, the same daal chaawal. And I do my daily riyaaz.

When I have to record a song for a film, I ask for the name of the heroine and then sing, keeping her face and personality in

mind. Like I knew for Rangeela, I was singing for a dubli patlisi ladki - Urmila.

I still enjoy singing only some of the songs now. Like I really enjoyed singing a number for Saawan Kumar... the song has a lot of rhythm and grace. In recent times I also enjoyed singing 'Zara sa jhoom looN main' [Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge]. Surprisingly, though this number did become very popular it hasn't received sufficient airplay on RV or on radio - despite repeated requests for it. I did talk to Pam Chopra about this, who's a very dear friend, and she said that she would look into the matter.

The line 'thandi thandi pavan' was sung with a slightly anglicised touch at the spur of the moment. I knew Kajol would be enacting that song. I kept her personality in mind, and since she's so full of life and sweet, i added that naughty angrezi-style touch.

On the "Rangeela" music director A. R. Rahman.

~~~~~~

While singing the numbers, I would ask Rahman " How is it.. allright?" And he would quietly say, "Yes, it sounds allright." Since he doesn't know Hindi fluently, we speak in English. It was almost like recording in a London studio... He understands the youth of today, he has brought about a freshness, a new sound to film music.

After Rangeela, I've sung a number for Rahmanbhai's score for Tara Rum Pum Pum and for Mani Ratnam's new Tamil film. He's always experimenting, doing something different which is very inspiring for a playback singer. When he gets some time off from his assignments, I thing a non-film album with A. R. Rahman will go through. I have a feeling that it'll be a groundbreaking album.

{ In another interview, she had noted the ease of recording with Rahman. "KyuNke recording bhi wohi karta hai, music bhi wohi banata hai, mixing bhi wohi karta hai, cues bhi wohi deta" etc etc. were her words. }

MDs coming back to her after Rangeela.

~~~~~~

I shouldn't say who has come back and who hasn't. All I can say is that there was a certain amount of hesitation which has disappeared now. There were some producers... like Ramesh

Behl.. who would always work with R. D. Burman. With time, they have either passed away or scattered into different direction.

And I must also say that I've never mixed with the film industry. I've never gone to parties or tried to strike friendships for professional gain from the very beginning. I've never sent bouquets of flowers and tiffins of food to film people. I haven't indulged in fake wah-wahi.

Instead I devoted my time to bringing up my children and looking after the house. I've been quite content in my own little world. I should thank my lucky stars that I've always been able to maintain my dignity and integrity. And when some of my songs are appreciated by the public and the critics, I regards that as one more feather in my cap.

On the making of the remix album, 'Rahul & I'

~~~~~~

I did it simply because others were doing it. And they were doing it in such a careless, haphazard way! Making dhaad dhoodh of the excellent compositions of Pancham. I was a bit upset that the new generation would identify him with the re-mix versions which had flooded the market all of a sudden. For instance, I met the classmates of my grand-daughter who's studying in a Panchgani school and they knew of 'Chura liya hai tumne' [YaadoN ki Baraat] only from Bally Sagoo's re-mix. They didn't know the original song or composer.. which is sad.

Everyone seems to be into re-mixes. Didi's songs, my songs like 'Jaane jaaN' [Jawaani Diwaani] and 'sona re' [Teesri Manzil] as well as the melodies of Madan Mohan are being mangled out of shape. A day may actually come when I'll have to inform my grand-daughter about who originally sang 'Dum maaro' [Hare Rama Hare Krishna]. In fact, I would sincerely request living singers to re-do their own songs.

For two months, Leslie Lewis (the re-mix engineer) thought about the pros and cons about re-mixing RD's songs. After much deliberation, we decided to go ahead with the project.

Frankly I was troubled when I heard Bally Sagoo's re-mix of 'Chura liya hai'. It just didn't have the right feeling.... Obviously sufficient labout hadn't gone into it. I didn't like the voice of the female singer either.
~~~~~~

Am I satisfied with the version of 'Mehbooba Mehbooba' [Sholay] originally sung by RD Burman? How can I comment on this? It's for others to tell me if I've done justice to the song or not. For me it has a lot of sentimental value attached to it. Initially, it was going to be performed on the screen by an artiste made up like a fat gypsy woman. Somehow, I felt that I wouldn't be right for the song then. I told Pancham to sing it himself. I know my version can't be as good as the original. But someone else would have done it... so I gave it a go myself. Even my children can't recognize my voice immediately because I've sung in a style which has never been associated with me.

I did wonder whether did would feel bad about the version of 'Jai jai shiv shankar' [Aap ki Qasam]. But then other singers have made a terrible mess of her songs... Am I referring to Anuradha Paudwal? *laugh* I never take names! Samajhnewalon ko ishara kaafi hai.

Music companies and politics in the industry.

~~~~~~

Well, I don't know what to say on this subject. But I will say that quite often music directors are told by certain record company artistes to use certain singers. They refuse to buy the music rights if the composers don't give in.

I am not identified with any one music company; neither do some music composers insist that they will only record with Asha Bhosle. In Mumbai, favoritism and patronage have become the rule. I was fortunate perhaps that Rangeela came from the south and the rights were purchased by the Time Music company.

I want to start my own music label. And my son has been encouraging me to establish my own label. So, let's see.

Ever since I was a 10 yr old, my major work has been with HMV. Even if there has been some indifference on their part at times, I've felt it was like my own family home. When other music companies arrived on the scene, I did record for a few other companies. But the politics and monopolies are bhayankar. This time around, I've recorded my album with Polygram. Let's see how they maintain the relationship. They've been very good to me so far. The working atmosphere was very courteous and result-oriented.

As for politics, oof, don't even talk about it. I have had to
~~~~~~

contend with politics in the music industry from day one right to today. I suppose it'll go on right to my dying day. I've always been honest and straight in my dealings but then honesty isn't always the best policy in this trade.

See, as a child I was so quiet that my mother would pinch me to see if I was allright. She would be alarmed, "Why isn't this child crying - is she mute?". After my marriage to Bhoslesahab, I would accept a lot. But then I saaw that this world indulges in lies and deceit. I would be angry , very very angry. I wanted to hit out, get my revenge. Gradually, I realised that this was aa waste of my energy and feelings. That's why ab gussa naheeN aata hai - ab mazaa aata hai.

When the Filmfare Special Award was announced on stage, the reaction of the general public was supportive; I could almost hear them saying she deserves it. At the same time I could feel that people from the film line weren't too happy. I received telegrams and bouquets of flowers only from those who are genuinely fond of me. Only the person who was once chief of HMV sent me a bouquet.

Guiness Book.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

I shouldn't talk about it myself, but anyone who cares to check the records will discover that I've sung 200 short of 11,000. Yes, my name has never appeared in the Guinness book but that is because I've never thought about it seriously enough - because I've never filled up the necessary application forms. If someone else does that for me, it's okay. But I won't personally fight for a place in the Guinness Book of World Records.

My children and my close friends do care about this. And there's a gentleman named Farid Malik who knows more about my life and my songs that I do. He even knows which colors I like and which I don't.

Ae mere watan ke logoN.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Was I the first choice for Ae mere watan ke logoN? Yes. I went through six rehearsals for the song. I was supposed to sing it as a solo number. All of a sudden, I was told that it would be a duet. So, I said I wasn't feeling well and got out of it.

{ On further probing - Are you being diplomatic?? } *laugh* Sometimes, you have to be diplomatic.

Her story.

~~~~~~~~~

{ On being told that a film was being made inspired by her life story }

Who can get to the heart of my life story? Only I know the truth. If anyone is trying to make a film on my life, it'll be imaginary and based on hearsay. In my book, I did write about what I have gone through. I talked about what happened to me - who did what is not important - which is why I didn't name any names.

Suicide.

~~~~~~~~

On one occasion, I did feel I should kill myself. I was ill, I was 4-months pregnant and I found myself in a hospital where the conditions were so bad that I thought that I had landed in hell. I was in mental agony and I swallowed a bottle of sleeping tablets. But then my love for my unborn dhild was so strong that I relented - I was dragged back to life.

I've also gone throught terrible times, for 2 years after the death of my husband R. D. Burman. But time heals. I've survived the odds and all the nasty allegations and accusations flung at me.

I won't say that our love was the love of a conventional husband and wife. Our love was on a different plane. Music was our life. There's a vacuum today. I don't feel the loneliness that a woman feels when her man goes away. I feel the loneliness when a piece of beautiful music stops playing. The silence remains forever.

RMIM Archive Article "254".

Asha Bhosle

Author: Varsha Bhosle[31]

---- Hers is a profile of true grit. Emerging out of the shadows of a sibling who is an undisputed Titan, conquering personal vicissi- tudes, Asha Bhonsle's career is a triumph of spirit and courage. Her daughter Varsha Bhonsle pays a brutally honest, uncloying, yet touching tribute to the woman she terms, Saturday's child. (Friday's child is warm and giving, Saturday's child works hard for a living...) The earliest memory I have of my mother - Mrs. Asha Bhonsle to you - is a fleeting montage of door-bells rung very late in the night, a sobbing woman hugging me back to sleep, the strains of strange, repetitive ringing emanating from behind a closed door. I bang on the door wanting to go in, but am roughly pulled away by a man when the music threatens to cease. Later, I learned that that was a routine day in the life of my father, guarding my mother against all impediment which may have prevented her from singing for their supper. I have erased my father from my memory, and with him, some of my own childhood; a defense mechanism, peo- ple call it. Mother came into her own quite suddenly. One day it struck her that her third, and advanced state of pregnancy may not be able to sustain the daily dose of bashing that came her way. She left behind every single she had earned, her bungalow, her car, even her clothes, and sought refuge with Mangeshkar, her mother. Of course, there were instant theories in the industry about this `desertion'. From now I am on safe ground: I do not have to rely on hearsay. However, my memories of my mother are still not that bright. She has to work twice as hard, as she has to rebuild from scratch and there is one more mouth to feed. Although she was always there to make our home, put us through school, spoil us with luxuries and take us on outings, I never had enough of her. How a single- parent manages to merge the roles of provider and home-maker is beyond my comprehension. Much later, I asked her, you had the security of the roof of your mother, your sisters; what was the rush to set up your own house? Instead, couldn't you have given us more time?" Without missing a beat she replied, "Never again did I want to be at the mercy of anyone else. It would have been equally harmful for you three. You had to grow up in your own home, with the freedom I alone sanctioned." We did, we did. After setting up independently, rebelled a textbook kind of rebellion. Much more than today, the film industry, like our society at large, was saturated with prejudices, hypocrisy and factions. And it wasn't surprising that Asha Bhonsle was branded a fallen woman. It certainly didn't help when the closest compar- able rival was her own sister, the ethereal Lata Mangeshkar. Soon, choice assignments were withdrawn and a conspiracy of silence manifested itself into her career. But if anyone so much as suggested something to alleviate the situation, you could bank on Asha Bhonsle to do the opposite. After more than a decade of suppression, and of keeping the shame of her squalid married life from her family and colleagues, she simply revelled in her abso- lute freedom. What still fascinates me is the total honesty and fearlessness with which she lived, as if to say, "My life is an open book, make what you will out of it". It's accepted that one needs to humanise a hero in order to understand and truly appre- ciate him, the corollary to which may be that anidol admitting to be made entirely of clay, as they all mustbe, is soon relegated to the pits. Whatever others may say, I remain convinced that her being gen- erally type-cast by music-directors as the perennial cabaret, or singer is a fall-out of her early life. I am hardly qualified to comment on music, but one fact is undeniable like any other extraordinary singer, she excelled in all genres, but Hindi film- makers were ticklish about giving their epitomes of Indian woman- hood, the voice of this rather camp personality. If the character was `westernised', her voice was that of Asha. The label stuck just at the time when the most memorable music was being composed for the Indian heroine. Curiously, the Marathi, Bengali and Gujarati music industries were totally unaffected by any of these tags: some of her best heroine-songs of that period are in these languages. At the risk of appearing politically incorrect, I have to say that it speaks volumes about certain

31Source: G magazine

regional-culture and sensitivity. Moreover, what a coincidence that just around the time of hermar- riage to R.D. Burman, the `cabaret-singer' label was replaced by the respectable `versatile'. I grit my teetheach time I hear it. Just another label signifying nothing. If I were to sum up my mother in one word, it would have to be `wilfulness' or `obstinacy' doesn't quite connote the shades of determination, and readiness to toil that I associate with it and her. The more formidable the issue, the harder she applies herself to it. Like her venture into the English music world as a member ofthe pop-group The West India Company, formed with Steven Luscombe of Blancmange. One fine day, Anand casually informed her that he had he had finalised the deal, and that in a month she would have to: compose, sing, interact with British musicians and technicians, give live interviews on radio, appear on television - and all this in English, in England. For a middle-aged person who had never been to school, let alone spoken a complete English sen- tence, this, I thought, was an impossibility. I was appalled. I had the stomach runs for a month, while she diligently rose at four a.m., donned her walkman and heard ` Spoken English' cassettes for hours. Well, she did it all: entered the Top-20 charts with her song `Ave Maria', appeared on British and German television shows, spoke lucidly on radio, addressed the British press, all with her usual unfazed panache. Her spirit reaches dizzying heights during concert tours. In 1989, she underwent the most rigorous schedule ever devised, dur- ing the USA tour. We had to play 13 cities in 20 days,which entailed cross-country flights taken barely a few hours after the completion of each show. Every musician was sapped by the time we boarded the plane immediately after the last concert in Houston. We were on our way for yet another gig in Stockholm, Sweden. This journey was the proverbial last straw: suffered a massive attack of colitis, together with fever, cough and weakness. The very first result of even one of these complaints is trem- bling of the voice, which then `splits' into two. At the pre- concert crisis meeting, it was short of cancelling the gig, the only way out was that the orchestra play umpteen instrumental tracks, the accompanying singers (Suresh Wadkarand yours truly) shoulder the load, and the billed star make a cursory appearance. Which would, no doubt, have led to a riot. Hereupon my multiple visits to the toilet commenced. At the stage-wings that evening, our band-conductor approached me with the news that Asha had rejected all such `insane' proposals; she would sing exactly what the audience had to come to hear. I must add here that most of Asha's hits, like etc, sound `frothy' and `airy' it is only when a lesser singer attempts them that one can gauge the tremendous breath-control and pitch modulation required for these non-classical, hence `lightweight', songs. It is solely her mastery that makes them seem so easy to execute. Anyway, I had been clutching at the misguided belief that the turnout in any city of Continental Europe would be less than moderate. But, as it must happen at such times, the whole show was a sell-out. The hall was packed with Indian and Pakistani expatriates when started with her first set of six songs. I could recognise the strain in the moments when she suddenly dropped the volume or signalled the violinist to join in. All I could do was deliver glasses of glucose to the stage. At best, it was an indifferent performance; I couldn't blame the audience for its lack of response. Before the start of the second set of songs, a lone voice cried out from the audience, "Asha - please sing a Marathi song. We've come a long way for it." She hummed the open- ing lines of a song which roughly transalates as "I'm also so very tired of this endless dancing, oh Lord..." I have yet to accept what happened in that flash. Perhaps it was a case of putting mind over matter. Or, perhaps she heard, under- stood and experienced the words like never before. Or, maybe the Conductor in the sky decided that she had been tested enough. Her eyes were closed, both hands clenching the microphone, as she crooned or belted out the stanzas as the mood gripped her. The notes and words seemed to swirl in a lazy vortex around the stage, gently eroding even the mildest defence in their path, till all was one pristine, homo-centric entity. I remember crying unashamedly, and a moist-eyed Suresh hugging me whilst murmuring things like "There will never be another like her; how can she conjure such magic, against such odds; how do they do it?" There was absolute silence when the song finally ended. And then, very slowly, as if gradually awakening froma stupor, the claps and encores started, building up to such a crescendo that the audito- rium virtually erupted. I was shocked after all, it wasn't a predominantly Maharashtri anaudience. But, that is the power of music. It is the last remaining frontier where complete harmony exists amongst people of all castes, religions and languages. From that point of time, the concert gained a momentum of its own:

wecould do nothing to curb it, and Asha Bhonsle could do nothing wrong. What did happen to the colitis, fever etc? She was in bed for a full month, recuperating from over-exertion. But that was after- wards. Ater all committments had been honourably discharged. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "325".

Asha Bhosle and Male co-singers

Posted by: Surjit Singh

Asha and 195 male singers of Hindi movie songs

Dear fellow music lovers:

Here is the info about the number of songs sung by Asha with males. As before, this info comes mainly from the book on Asha, called "svaraashaa" published by Vishwas Nerurkar of Bombay, who published a similar book on Lata earlier.

From 1931 up to now, according to a rough count by me, approximately 1290 (give or take 10) singers have sung for Hindi movies. Of these about 540 have been female and about 750 male. It is remarkable that Asha has sung with so many of them considering that she started singing 16 years after the beginnning of talkies.

The following includes songs from Hindi-Urdu films only and is up to 1994. The main part of the list is arranged as follows: the name of the male singer, total number of songs sung with Asha, total number of movies with Asha, duets in which Asha, the named singer sang and possibly chorus sang, others in which another singer/s male and/or female participated. In my last post about Asha and female singers, I said that the duets featured Asha and another female voice only. In fact, Nerurkar counts as duets even those songs in which the chorus participates with Asha and another singer. So, this correction should be made in the previous post. As usual, transliteration scheme of Chopde has been used.

As usual, the ultimate source of most of this info is the 5-volume Hindi Film Giit Kosh by Har Mandir Singh Hamaraaz and Bishwa Nath Chatterjee.

name	songs	movies	duets	other
rafii	880	514	781	99
kishor	656	451	589	67
mahendra kapuur	212	173	165	47
mannaa De	184	164	124	60
amit kumaar	114	86	93	21
suresh vaaDakar	91	76	70	21
muhammad azziiz	68	62	62	6
shabbiir kumaar	67	53	58	9

mukesh	58	53	50	8
talat	55	43	50	5
kumaar shaanuu	46	28	42	4
shailendr singh	44	41	25	19
s. p. baala-subrmaNyam	33	22	30	3
bhappii laahi.Dii	31	30	28	3
raahul barman	27	26	21	6
hemant	26	19	23	3
balabiir	22	20	8	14
anvar	22	18	19	3
chitalakar	22	14	20	2
udit naaraayaN	15	15	9	6
manahar udhaas	15	14	11	4
omii	15	13	11	4
bhuupendra	14	17	0	14
g. m. durraanii	13	11	12	1
s. d. baatish	13	10	7	6
nitin mukesh	12	10	12	0

yesudaas	9	8	8	1
anuup jaloTaa	8	3	8	0
kumaar sonik	7	6	0	7
aziiz naazaa.N	6	6	5	1
jasapaal singh	6	5	2	4
vinod raaTho.D	6	4	6	0
vinod sahagal	6	4	5	1
mahamuud	6	4	1	5
annuu malik	5	5	3	2
shankaradaas guptaa	5	5	2	3
abhijiit	5	4	3	2
pradiip	4	4	3	1
ravi	4	4	3	1
vijay benedict	4	4	3	1
bande hasan	4	4	2	2
Kaan mastaanaa	4	3	4	0
rishii kapuur	4	3	1	3
a. hariharan	3	3	3	0
nasiiruddiin shaah	3	3	3	0
unidentified male	3	3	3	0
jagamohan baKshii	3	3	2	1
shamindar paal	3	3	2	1
sudesh bhosale	3	3	2	1
aanand kumaar c.	3	3	1	2
lakshmiikaant	3	3	1	2
bhuushaN mehataa	3	3	0	3
Gulaam muhammad	3	3	0	3
master gopaal	3	2	3	0
sapan chakravartii	3	2	0	3
a. r. ojhaa	2	2	2	0

aaGaa saravar	2	2	2	0
bulo c. raanii	2	2	2	0
dev aanand	2	2	2	0
hridyanaath mangeshkar	2	2	2	0
mangal singh	2	2	2	0
samiir daate	2	2	2	0
satyashiil deshapaanDe	2	2	2	0
shailesh mukharjii	2	2	2	0
shatrughan sinhaa	2	2	2	0
shyaamal mitraa	2	2	2	0
subiir sen	2	2	2	0
vijay singh	2	2	2	0
amol paalekar	2	2	1	1
ashok kumaar	2	2	1	1
diliip sen	2	2	1	1
jaanii baabuu qavvaal	2	2	1	1
jogindar	2	2	1	1
jolly mukharjii	2	2	1	1
motii saagar	2	2	1	1
shaahuu modak	2	2	1	1
shashii kapuur	2	2	1	1
sundar	2	2	1	1
surindar kohalii	2	2	1	1
amiin saayaanii	2	2	0	2
chandrashekhar gaaDagil	2	2	0	2
mahesh kumaar	2	2	0	2
pankaj mitraa	2	2	0	2
p. b. shriinivaas	2	1	2	0
rasik j.	2	1	2	0
shivaraam krishaN aruN kumaar mukharjii	2	1	2	0
gautam raay	2	1	1	1
muhammad yunus	2	1	1	1
vipin sachadev	2	1	1	1

These males have only one song with her, in one movie:

aanand baKshii, afazal husain, ambar kumaar, anil bisvaas, annuu kapuur, anvar husain, aravind, aruN baKshii, ashok khare, ashok khosalaa, baabalaa mehataa, baalakaraam, badriinaath vyaas, basantaraav deshapaanDe, baTuk desaaii, channii singh, Dannii Dangzonppaa, devendra, dhiiraj kumaar, gangaa prasaad, gauhar kaanapurii, guradaas maan, hemant bhosale, ismaail aazaad, jagajiit singh, k. baala-subramaNyam, kamal, kamalesh avasthii, madan mahendra, mahendra sandhuu, maheshvaram, master prakaash, mukul,

nanduu boharaa, naresh kannoDiyaa, naviin nishchal, nitin, pankaj dhiir, pankaj udhaas, prem chopa.Daa, premanaath, raaj grovar, raajiiv kapuur, raam, ramesh guptaa, raviindra jain, s. g. shriikumaar, sanjay Kaan, santaraam, satiish babbar, shaahid rafii, sukhavindar, suniil datt, surindar, sushiil kumaar, talat azziiz, tiirath, vinod khannaa, vishaal gosvaamii, vivek varmaa, yusuf aazaad.

These males have sung only one song with her in one movie, but with other main voices also participating:

ajiit singh, amar sheK, amitaabh bachchan, anuup guptaa, baasu, badrii pavaar, badriiprasaad, baggan, bonny remeDios, brij bhuushaN, chitragupt, diliip raay, harindra-naath chaTTopaadhyaay, jayavant kulakarNii, jyo, keshTo mukharjii, kishor sharmaa, kokaakolaa, Kokaan chaudharii, mahendra paal, mahesh, manamohan singh, mohan choTii, mubaaraq, mukarii, narendra bhansaalii, narendra chanchal, om prakaash, parashuraam, pascal paul, prayaag raaj, raajuu shreshTha, raakesh hans, saaheb, shankar shambhuu, sharad kumaar, sonik, subhaash, sudesh kumaar, suniil, sunny deol, Tinu aanand, vinod, vinod meharaa.

Acknowledgment: Most of what I write on Hindi films would not have been possible without the constant support and encouragement of my wife, Harmesh Kaur.

Enjoy!

Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fan(atic), period.

RMIM Archive Article "326".

Asha Bhosle and Music Directors

Posted by: Surjit Singh

Author: Surjit Singh dussh@ttacs.ttu.edu

Asha and 309 MD's of Hindi movie songs

This is my final post on Asha in the present series. In this one, I post the info about the number of songs set to music for Asha by various MD's. For details on sources etc., see the earlier posts.

In the table for MD's as reported by nerurakar in his book, there are misprints for four MD's. They are, chaand paradesi, suresh-talavaar, suhrid kar and hemant. I have made corrections to these entries by consulting the giit kosh by har mandir singh. The table that appears below is the corrected version. If you are lucky to have the Asha book, please make these corrections in your copy.

From 1931 up to now, approximately 1060 (give or take 10) MD's have provided music for Hindi movies. There have been about 20 female MD's. I counted about 170 pairs, triplets or higher multiplets of MD's. The following list is arranged as in my earlier posts on Asha.

music director/s	songs	films	solo	m	f	others
r. d. barman	652	250	279	292	18	63
lakshamiikaant-pyaarelaal	485	237	206	204	35	40
bhappii laahi.Dii	442	189	165	251	5	21
ravi	385	101	215	132	25	13
o. p. nayyar	317	60	165	121	23	8
kalyaaNajii-aanandajii	297	154	152	106	18	21
sonik-omii	273	96	150	73	25	25
ushaa khannaa	220	102	149	53	14	4
shankar-jaikishan	214	110	105	77	19	13
chitragupt	209	67	143	50	13	3
madan moham	190	72	119	53	15	3
n. dattaa	164	49	108	40	13	3
s. d. barman	140	53	78	50	7	5
c. raamachandra	132	37	73	41	10	8
s. n. tripaaThii	129	43	83	20	21	5

raviindra jain	120	56	68	42	4	6
avinaash vyaas	110	30	90	17	2	1
roshan	99	36	51	26	13	9
sapan jagamohan	98	35	72	22	4	0
Kayyaam	90	36	62	23	3	2
vinod	87	21	54	21	9	3
raajesh roshan	83	54	34	40	5	4
s. mohindar	81	26	44	26	9	2
hemant kumaar	78	32	50	22	4	2
annu malik	71	35	29	39	0	3
iqabaal quraishii	70	21	37	27	5	1
jayadev	64	26	47	11	5	1
hemant bhosale	62	18	25	28	3	6
hansaraaj bahal	58	26	29	16	9	4
bulo c. raanii	52	20	37	11	3	1
nadiim-shravaN	48	21	10	37	1	0
allarakhaa quraishii	48	12	38	5	4	1
saradaar malik	47	18	36	7	4	0
raam-lakshamaN	45	17	18	20	2	5
gaNesh	44	14	31	7	5	1
g. s. kohalii	43	14	29	10	4	0
naashad	40	10	22	11	4	3
vasant desaaii	39	16	20	5	10	4
paNDit shivaraam krishaN	38	14	26	7	4	1
c. arjun	38	13	23	10	4	1
b. n. baalii	35	8	25	7	3	0
naushaad	34	18	13	16	2	3
laalaa-sattar	34	8	18	9	7	0
salil chaudharii	31	19	24	4	2	1
anil bisvaas	31	10	16	10	1	4
nisaar bazmii	31	7	12	19	0	0
dattaaraam	29	11	14	7	5	3
maanaaDe	28	7	19	7	2	0
bipin-baabul	27	8	16	10	1	0
s. d. baatish	27	6	23	4	0	0
husnalaal-bhagataraam	26	8	18	5	2	1
lachhiiraam	26	7	19	5	1	1
vasant pavaar- raam vaaDhaavakar	22	5	19	2	1	0
saardul kavatraa	20	9	16	4	0	0
suresh-talavaar	20	7	15	5	0	0
Gulaam muhammad	19	9	14	4	0	1
prem dhavan	19	8	10	4	5	0
dhaniiraam	19	6	16	2	1	0
satyam	18	7	13	3	1	1
suurya kumaar paal	18	6	13	5	0	0
jamaal sen	18	6	11	7	0	0
baabul	18	5	9	8	0	1
kishor kumaar	17	7	7	8	0	2
snehal bhaaTakar	16	4	11	3	1	1
basant prakaash	15	7	12	3	0	0

bholaa shreshTh	15	6	12	3	0	0
ajiit merchant	15	5	13	2	0	0
raabin chaTarjii	15	5	11	1	1	2
aziiz hindii	15	3	9	4	2	0
chaand paradesii	14	9	8	5	1	0
vedapaal varmaa	14	8	13	1	0	0
sanmukh baabuu upaadhayaay	14	4	14	0	0	0
ramesh naayaDuu	14	3	11	3	0	0
maanas mukharjii	13	8	7	4	2	0
vanaraaj bhaaTiyaa	13	6	10	3	0	0
aruN kumaar mukharjii	13	4	9	3	0	1
naaraayaN datt	13	3	6	7	0	0
k. baabuujii	13	3	5	8	0	0
aanand-milind	12	7	4	8	0	0
ilyaaraajaa	12	6	4	7	0	1
shankarasraav vyaas	12	5	10	2	0	0
govind-naresh	12	5	8	2	2	0
shyaamajii-ghanashyaamajii	12	5	7	5	0	0
shyaamal mitraa	12	5	7	5	0	0
baasu-manoharii	12	4	8	2	2	0
hafiiz Kaan	12	3	8	4	0	0
sumitraa laahi.Dii	11	9	9	2	0	0
brij bhuushaN	11	5	9	2	0	0
jagajiit singh	11	5	8	2	1	0
dillip sen-samiir sen	11	5	2	7	0	2
paNDit gobindaraam	11	4	7	2	2	0
sudhiir pha.Dake	11	4	6	5	0	0
iqabaal gil	10	6	6	4	0	0
surindar kohalii	10	6	5	5	0	0
muhammad shafii	10	5	6	3	0	1
jiituu-tapan	10	5	3	7	0	0
bhuushaN mehataa	10	3	7	2	1	0
bipin datt	10	3	5	3	2	0
paNDit motiiram	10	2	7	3	0	0
anuup jaloTaa	10	2	3	7	0	0
jimmii	9	5	6	2	1	0
ratanadiip-hemaraaj	9	4	6	2	0	1
daan singh	9	3	7	1	1	0
raamalaal	9	3	6	2	1	0
sajjaad husain	9	3	5	2	2	0
r. sudarshanam	9	2	4	5	0	0
manoj-gyaan	8	4	8	0	0	0
sapan chakravartii	8	4	3	5	0	0
aadi naaraayaN raav	8	3	4	3	1	0
sumant raaj	8	2	8	0	0	0
kamal maKaduum	8	2	7	1	0	0
gulashan suufii	8	2	6	2	0	0
kamal mitraa	8	2	6	2	0	0
jugal kishor-tilak raaj	7	5	5	2	0	0

raghunaath seTh	7	4	6	1	0	0
k. datta	7	4	6	0	1	0
suresh kumaar	7	4	4	3	0	0
raaj kamal	7	3	7	0	0	0
jayakumaar paarTe	7	3	6	1	0	0
raabin banarjii	7	3	5	2	0	0
premanaath	7	2	6	1	0	0
roshanalaal khatrii	7	2	6	1	0	0
s. purushottam	7	2	6	1	0	0
sudhiir sen	7	2	5	0	1	1
krishaN dayaa	7	1	5	2	0	0
hridyanaath mageshakar	6	5	3	2	1	0
bhuupen hazaarikaa	6	4	6	0	0	0
vijay singh	6	4	2	4	0	0
aalok gaangulii	6	2	5	1	0	0
raamalaal-hiiraapanna	6	2	5	1	0	0
manohar	6	2	0	3	2	1
nisaar bazmii-chik chocolate	6	1	2	4	0	0
ajay svaamii	5	5	4	1	0	0
shiv-harii	5	3	4	1	0	0
shyaam saagar	5	3	3	2	0	0
jatin-lalit	5	3	2	2	0	1
asit gaangulii	5	2	2	3	0	0
mahesh-kishor	5	2	2	2	0	1
bhaanu Thakur	5	1	5	0	0	0
kanakaraaj	5	1	5	0	0	0
prabhaakar jog	5	1	4	1	0	0
raamachandra paal	5	1	4	1	0	0
t. v. raajuu	5	1	4	0	1	0
malay chakravartii	5	1	3	2	0	0
rono deb mukharjii	5	1	3	2	0	0
niiraj-uttank	5	1	2	3	0	0
amar-utpal	4	4	3	1	0	0
ajiit varman	4	3	2	2	0	0
harii-arjun	4	3	2	2	0	0
kamalakaant	4	2	4	0	0	0
niinuu majumadaar	4	2	4	0	0	0
Trinaa chakravartii	4	2	4	0	0	0
khemachandra prakaash	4	2	3	1	0	0
laalaa-asar-sattaar	4	2	3	0	1	0
ali akabar Kaan	4	2	2	2	0	0
diliip raay	4	2	2	1	1	0
Kurshiid anvar	4	2	1	0	0	3
khokaan chaudharii	4	2	0	3	0	1
ratnesh sarakaar	4	1	4	0	0	0
surasaagar jagamohan	4	1	4	0	0	0
bulo c. raanii-j. b. h. vaaDiaaa	4	1	3	1	0	0
dev-sanjiiv-vaDhaavakar-paarsekar	4	1	3	1	0	0

shaantii kumaar desaaii	4	1	3	1	0	0
baasudev	4	1	2	2	0	0
nirmal kumaar	4	1	2	2	0	0
t. g. lingappaa	4	1	2	2	0	0
vasant prabhuu	4	1	2	2	0	0
suhrid kaar	4	1	2	2	0	0
gunjan	4	1	2	1	1	0
s. madan	4	1	2	1	1	0
chakravartii	4	1	1	3	0	0
shankaralaal	4	1	1	2	1	0
j. p. kaushik	3	3	3	0	0	0
uttam-jagadiish	3	3	3	0	0	0
jagadiish j.	3	3	2	1	0	0
shaarang dev	3	3	2	0	0	1
ajiit singh	3	2	3	0	0	0
v. balasaaraa	3	2	3	0	0	0
vijay baTaalavii	3	2	3	0	0	0
raayachand boraal	3	2	2	1	0	0
sudiipta	3	2	2	1	0	0
prem guptaa	3	2	1	1	1	0
hanumaan prasaad	3	2	0	2	0	1
b. lakshamaN	3	1	3	0	0	0
paanDurang diikshit	3	1	3	0	0	0
kumaar	3	1	2	1	0	0
nandii duggal	3	1	2	1	0	0
p. naageshvara raav	3	1	2	1	0	0
s. n. tripaaThii-chitragupt	3	1	2	1	0	0
timir baran-suurya kumaar paal	3	1	2	1	0	0
hariish dhavan	3	1	2	0	1	0
jagajiit khannaa	3	1	2	0	1	0
channii singh	3	1	1	2	0	0
rasik j.-m. husaain-g. yash	3	1	1	2	0	0
satiish bhaaTiyaa	3	1	1	2	0	0
ghanashyaam pyaare	3	1	1	0	0	2
charaNajiit aahuujaa	3	1	0	3	0	0
james singh	3	1	0	3	0	0
kaanu raay	2	2	2	0	0	0
shambhuu sen	2	2	2	0	0	0
yunus malik	2	2	2	0	0	0
dhiiraj kumaar	2	2	1	1	0	0
mahesh-naresh	2	2	1	1	0	0
nitin mangesh	2	2	1	1	0	0
baasu chakravartii	2	2	0	2	0	0
kuladiip singh	2	2	0	2	0	0
baabalaa	2	1	2	0	0	0
baabul bos	2	1	2	0	0	0
diipan chaTarjii	2	1	2	0	0	0
g. raamanaathan-						

b. n. baalii	2	1	2	0	0	0
ghanashyaam laal sukhavaal	2	1	2	0	0	0
harabans	2	1	2	0	0	0
jagajiit-chitraa singh	2	1	2	0	0	0
kaantii kiraN	2	1	2	0	0	0
kaanu ghosh	2	1	2	0	0	0
khemachandra prakaash-mannaDe	2	1	2	0	0	0
miina mangeshakar	2	1	2	0	0	0
naashaad-sonik	2	1	2	0	0	0
p. d. sharmaa	2	1	2	0	0	0
pradiip raay chaudharii	2	1	2	0	0	0
raajan paal	2	1	2	0	0	0
raam gaangulii	2	1	2	0	0	0
s. m. subbayyaah	2	1	2	0	0	0
s. raajeshvararaav	2	1	2	0	0	0
shankar	2	1	2	0	0	0
shyaam sundar	2	1	2	0	0	0
vishvanaathan-raamaamuurtii	2	1	2	0	0	0
vishvashankar	2	1	2	0	0	0
aafataab-saliim	2	1	1	1	0	0
anil-nandaa	2	1	1	1	0	0
d. c. datt	2	1	1	1	0	0
dattaraaj-shyaamabaabuu	2	1	1	1	0	0
dilashaad kamal	2	1	1	1	0	0
gajaanan	2	1	1	1	0	0
gangaa saagar	2	1	1	1	0	0
h. parashuraam	2	1	1	1	0	0
madhu mukharjii	2	1	1	1	0	0
narendra raajapuut	2	1	1	1	0	0
paNDit harabans laal	2	1	1	1	0	0
pankaj udhaas	2	1	1	1	0	0
raaj ratan	2	1	1	1	0	0
raaj sonik	2	1	1	1	0	0
raam prasaad	2	1	1	1	0	0
ranjiit gajamer	2	1	1	1	0	0
som dev kashyap	2	1	1	1	0	0
surindar kohalii-gurabachan	2	1	1	1	0	0
t. r. paapaa	2	1	1	1	0	0
b. t. singh	2	1	1	0	0	1
sonik-girdhar	2	1	1	0	1	0
vishNu khannaa	2	1	1	0	1	0
Kaan mastaanaa	2	1	0	2	0	0
vakiil baabuu	2	1	0	2	0	0
d. m. Taigor	2	1	0	1	1	0
g. p. kapuur	2	1	0	1	1	0
khemachandra prakaash-bholaa shreshTh	2	1	0	1	0	1

naaraayaN	2	1	0	1	0	1

The following people gave music for one solo in one movie:

aalhaad-amariish, ajay-vishvanaath, anil-aruN, anupam ghaTak, b. d. barman, bhuupendra singh, bhuvan harii, c. k. chauhaan, chetan, d. s. ruben, dhiiraj-babaluu, diliip dattaa, dulaal sen, gyaanadatt, hemant kedaar, himaanushu bisvaas, kamal raajasthaanii, krishaN kamal, maanas mukh-arjii-vishaal bhaardvaaj, mukul raay, mustafaa yuusuf, om-kaar, paNDit ravi shankar, raam kadam, ratanadiip, s. kishan, s. v. venkaTaraaman-t. r. raamanaathan, shekhar, shriikaant telang, sulochanaa manandhar, svaamii amit, ustaad vilaayat Kaan, vidyut gosvaamii, vipin reshamiyaa, viTThal mumataaz.

These folks gave music for just one of her non-solos for just one movie:

aziiz naazaan, Gulaam alii, h. hari darshan, jaya govind, k. baalakrishaN, kalyaaNajii viirajii shaah, manadhiir-jatin, naresh sharmaa, raajahans kaTaariyaa, shriirang aaras, shyaam, sudarshan, sushaant banarjii, tushaar bhaaTiyaa, pankaj bhaTT, r. k. aruN, saradaar malik-premanaath, shyaamabaabuu paathak

---

Acknowledgment: Most of what I write on Hindi films would not have been possible without the constant support and encouragement of my wife, Harmesh Kaur.

Enjoy!

Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fan(atic), period

RMIM Archive Article "327".

Asha Bhosle and Female Co-singers

Posted by: Surjit Singh

Author: Surjit Singh dussh@ttacs.ttu.edu

Asha & Female Co-singers

The following info comes from the book on Asha, called "svaraashaa" published by Vishwas Nerurkar of Bombay, who published a similar book on Lata earlier.

The following includes songs from Hindi-Urdu films only and is up to 1994. The main part of the list is arranged as follows: the name of the female singer, total number of songs sung with Asha, total number of movies with Asha, duets in which Asha and the named singer sang alone, others in which another singer/s male and/or female participated. As usual, transliteration scheme of Avinash Chopde has been used.

As usual, the ultimate source of most of this info is the 5-volume Hindi Film Giit Kosh by Har Mandir Singh Hamaraaz and Bishwa Nath Chatterjee.

name	songs	movies	duets	other
ushaa mangeshakar	181	173	146	35
lataa	79	72	58	21
shamashaad	53	29	32	21
giitaa datt	36	32	31	5
kamal baaroT	35	29	26	9
sudhaa malhotraa	33	30	20	13
dilaraaj kaur	22	17	10	12
miinuu purushottam	21	16	12	9
ushaa khannaa	17	16	14	3
mubaaraq	13	12	10	3
ushaa timothii	12	12	10	2
hemalataa	12	12	5	7
suman kalyaaNapur	10	10	9	1
chandraaNii mukharjii	9	4	5	4
sushamaa shreshTh	6	6	1	5
kavitaa krishNamuurtii	5	5	4	1
saadhanaa saragam	5	5	3	2
zoharaabaaii	5	5	2	3
shaaradaa	4	4	3	1
aaratii mukharjii	4	4	2	2
miinaa mangeshakar	4	4	0	4

shivaangii kolhaapure	4	3	0	4
sulochanaaa kadam	3	3	3	0
raajakumarii	3	3	2	1
sabitaa banarjii	3	3	2	1
vanitaa mishra	3	3	1	2
gurapriit kaur	3	3	0	3
kanchan	3	3	0	3
rimaa laahi.Dii	3	3	0	3
kavitaa pau.Davaal	3	2	2	1
chaandabaalaa	3	1	1	2
raanuu mukharjii	3	1	1	2
faiyaaz	3	1	0	3
lakshmii raay	2	2	2	0
minal vaagh	2	2	2	0
antaraa chaudharii	2	2	1	1
anupamaa deshapaaNDe	2	2	1	1
aruNaa iiraanii	2	2	1	1
madhubaalaa zhaaverii	2	2	1	1
miinaa kapuur	2	2	1	1
simmii garevaal	2	2	1	1
suraiyaa	2	2	1	1
padminii kolhaapure	2	2	0	2
rekhaa	2	1	1	1
varshaa bhosale	2	1	1	1
raajeshvarii	2	1	0	2

The following female singers had only one duet with Asha in only one film:

aashimaa banarjii, amiirabaaii karnaaTakii anuraadhaa pau.Davaal, aparNaa mayekar, baby bulabul hamiidaa, henriTaa krieDo, jagajiit kaur, maalaa miinakshii, miiraa siraaj, p. sushiilaa paraviin baabii, paraviin sultaanaa, pramodinii puur.Naa seTh, raanii gairolaa, s. jaanakii saavitrii, saralaa kapuur, shailaa, shammii siitaa, siitaa banarjii, sujaataa sulakshNaa paN.Dit, surindar kaur, ushaa ayyar yogitaa baalii

The following female singers had only one song with Asha in only one film, but other singers were involved, male, female or chorus:

aineT, beharoz chaTarjii, bhaavanaa shaah chaand kumarii, Dimpal, Dolly Daavajekar guracharan kaur, indiraa, iraa naagarath jayashrii shivaraam, kalyaaNii, kamalaa shriivaastav kaushalyaa, komal, miis vijay, mohanataaraa ajinky munmii boharaa, paamelaa chopa.Daa, pramilaa daataar priiti, priyaa mayekar, puur.Nimaa,

```
rekhaa jayakar saagarikaa mukharjii, salamaa aaGaa,
sapanaa mukharjii suhaasinii kolhaapure, ushaa, ushaa
rege, ushaa utthup


 "Dr. Surjit Singh, (dussh@ttacs.ttu.edu)
```

RMIM Archive Article "328".

Number of songs by Asha

Posted by: Surjit Singh

Author: Surjit Singh dussh@ttacs.ttu.edu

Here is what Nerurakar says in the book called "svaraashaa":

The number of songs sung by Asha in various languages is as follows:

Hndi films	7594
Marathi films	1200
Gujarati films	450
Panjabi films	250
Bangali films	350
Bhojpuri films	150
Rajasthani/magadhi /maithili/marawadi films	50
other language films	50
non-filmi songs	250
Total	10344

(In this list, the number of Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and Panjabi songs is totally accurate. But the number of Bangali, Bhojpuri, Rajasthani, Magadhi, Maithili, Marawadi and other regional language songs is estimated.)

My comment: It is hard to believe that the number of songs in the languages claimed to be "totally accurate" is divisible by 10 or 100. My feeling is that these are also estimates. In the absence of an exact count, one might say that the error in the number of non-Hindi-film songs (2750) should be calculated from a Gaussian distribution (square root of 2750) and so the total number of songs sung by Asha is

10344 plus-minus 52.

Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fan(atic), period.

RMIM Archive Article "374".

Lata, Asha and Madan Mohan - statistics

Posted by: fj076@cleveland.freenet.edu (Balaji A.S. Murthy)

Author: Balaji Murthy

```
---------------------------------------------------------------------
                Asha, Lata and Madan Mohan in the 50s

                    - A Statistical comparison
---------------------------------------------------------------------

Few months back I  compiled the count of songs  during 50s for both
under MM.

A couple of quick obversations.

        -  The totals   for both   are amazingly   close, in  fact,
           assuming Asha had 3-4  songs in beTii, the totals  might
           as well be equal.

        -  Lata does have more solos than Asha.  Asha count reduced
           later as  probably the duets dried   up and solos became
           almost exlusively Lata's.

        -  There is not a single movie in 50s where Madan Mohan did
           not use at least on of the two sisters.

        -  Of the 39 movies Lata featured in 28 and Asha in 31.


- Balaji



Here is the table.
```

		Total Songs	Lata Total	Lata Solos	Lata Duets*	Asha Total	Asha Solos	Asha Duets*
1951	adaa	8	3	3	0	1	0	1
	madahosh	9	6	6	0	0	0	0
1952	aashiyaanaa	9	6	6	0	0	0	0
	a.njaam	8	0	0	0	1	0	0
	khuubasuurat	8	0	0	0	2	2	0
	nirmohii	8	6	6	0	0	0	0
1953	baaGii	7	5	5	0	0	0	0
	chaachaa chaudharii	9	0	0	0	6	4	2

	dhun	11	4	3	1	0	0	0
1954	ehasaan	7	2	2	0	4	4	0
	ilzaam	8	0	0	0	5	3	2
	mastaanaa	8	0	0	0	2	0	2
1955	Railway Platform	10	3	3	0	3	0	2
1956	bhaa_ii bhaa_ii	11	8	6	2	1	1	0
	Fifty Fifty	8	3	3	0	0	0	0
	mem saahib	7	0	0	0	6	4	2
	Pocket-maar	8	7	5	2	0	0	0
1957	beTii	7	0	0	0	?@	?@	?@
	chhoTe baabuu	7	4	2	2	1	0	0
	dekh kabiiraa royaa	10	4	3	0	2	1	1
	Gateway of India	8	4	2	2	1	0	0
	samundar	8	4	3	1	0	0	0
	sheruu	7	1	1	0	2	1	1
1958	aakharii daa.Nv	7	1	0	1	4	3	1
	adaalat	8	4	4	0	4	1	2
	chandan	6	1	1	0	3	3	0
	ek sholaa	8	0	0	0	6	3	2
	Jailor	9	2	2	0	5	2	3
	Kazaa.Nchii	6	0	0	0	6	5	1
	khoTaa paisaa	7	0	0	0	5	4	1
	Night Club	7	0	0	0	6	5	0
1959	baap beTe	8	4	3	0	2	0	1
	Bank Manager	6	1	1	0	4	4	0
	chaachaa zindaabaad	8	4	1	3	2	2	0
	duniyaa na maane	8	3	2	1	3	2	0
	jaagiir	6	1	1	0	2	2	0
	Minister	6	2	1	1	4	0	4
	mohar	7	4	3	1	1	1	0
1960	bahaanaa	8	3	3	0	2	1	1
Total		306	100	81	17	96@	58@	29@

* Only male female duets are taken into account, same-sex duets and songs with more than two singers are not in this count

@ beTii had songs by Asha and Batish, but the break down of which was sung by whom wasn't available. Therefore Asha's counts are higher than those above.

RMIM Archive Article "14".

Kundan Lal Saigal

Posted by: "Rajan P. Parrikar[32]" (parrikar@mimicad.Colorado.EDU)

The year was 1935 and Kundanlal Saigal was singing at the Allaha- bad Music Conference. His voice held the huge gathering spellbound. I too came under the spell. Being at the peak of my musical career, I had been invited to perform along with several other noted artists from all over India. Saigal came from Calcut- ta. He was at that time the uncrowned king of the screen. His un- forgettable role in Devdas and his poignant rendering of Piya bin nahee aavat chain had captured millions of hearts. At the end of his performance, Saigal received a standing ovation which lasted several minutes. It was impossible for any other ar- tist to perform that evening after Saigal's tremendous success. As I came out of the hall, I was greeted by my old friend from Nagpur, Mr. D. N. Hosali who later introduced me to Saigal. They were close friends and had travelled together from Calcutta. Saigal and Hosali were guests of a rich young zamindar and they insisted that I too should go and stay with them. During dinner, someone suggested that we should go and have a taste of the gay musical night-life of the city. The young zamindar was, of course, familiar with the most reputed joints, and so off we all drove. In those days, in decent society, music was taboo - it was considered immoral to learn or listen to music - much more so for girls. I had heard a lot about the 'mujra mehfil' (song and dance performances at the client's request) of the dancing girls and my curiosity was aroused; I was soon slowly following the other three up the steps of the singing girls' house. At the entrance we were greeted by a middle aged lady with a broad smile and the traditional salutation 'Adabaraz'. We walked into an elegantly furnished chamber, brilliantly lit. The entire floor was covered with soft, rich coloured woollen carpets and matresses. Moments later two young girls, just out of their teens, entered fram a side room. Having seen the film Devdas, they found Saigal's presence in person both awe-inspiring and highly pleas- ing. Saigal's friendly approach and unassuming manner soon dispelled their awe. An exuberant and intelligent conversation ensued. It was full of wity and spontaneous repartee in which these girls are specially trained, and with which Saigal appeared to be quite familiar. For me, this was a new and revealing ex- perience, and I watched the scene with interest. One of the girls approached us with a tray of paanpattis and whcn my turn came, I was so confused and nervous that the girl gave a mischievous smile as my trembling fingers lifted the paan. I mut- tered my thanks, young girls, one was an accomplished singer with a rich, sonorous voice, and the other was an expert dancer. Thumri, the most captivating style in Hindustani music, has its home in U.P. The Banarasi or Purab form of presenting it has no parallel in light classical music. The dancer used her feet, hands, fingers, neck, eyes and eyebrows most epressively to il- lustrate the song. After another item - a Kathak dance - Saigal and the zamindar paid the girls and we rose to go. It was about 2.30 a.m. when we got back to the zamindar's kothee. It was si- tuated on he river bank, not far from the confluence of the Ganga and Jamuna. Cool breezes brought fragrane from the garden below, while the full moon turned the river milky white. Saigal was in a happy mood and started humming. The zamindar produced a harmoni- um which I started playing. Saigal requested me to join him in singing. Taking the cue from the notes he hummed, I began a thum- ri in Mishra Khamaj - Mane Nahee Samiya. Instantly Saigal took up the refrain and then there followed a musical duet. Saigal then started Babul Mora, his piece de resistane in Bhairavi. The first rays of the sun heralding the dawn brought us down to earth. I kept in touch with Saigal, and in the month of December, the same year, we met again - this time in Calcutta where I had gone for the Calcutta musical conference. My wife had accompanied me. Saigal took us home for dinner one evening. We had the privilege of meeting his old parents. Hailing from the beautiful valley of Kashmir, they were tall and fair and had a very impressive pres- ence. It was at the dinner table that night that I learnt more about Saigal. Before he made music and acting his vocation, Saigal had been a time-keeper in the Punjab railways. After that he had worked for a while as a typewriter salesman. He used to sing only within his circle of friends. Singing was his hobby. The credit for discovering Saigal goes to a representative of the Hindustan Recording Company. He correctly estimated the sales potential of the young man and bound him down to a life-long contract. This is why all his non-film songs were invariably issued during his lifetime, under the Hindustan label, although in later years his records of film songs appeared under H.M.V. Iabel. (Hindustan was a sister concern to H.M.V.) Years rolled by and Saigal continued to reach new heights of fame and popularity. Entering New Theatres in 1931, he became the na- tional matinee idol. Chandidas, Devdas, Street

32 Source: G.N. Joshi's Down Melody Lane

Singer and Dushman were all huge box office successes. He soon migrated to Bombay to win new laurels. I, in the meantime, had joined H.M.V. as recording executive. We met in 1943, in the recording studios. He embraced me and there were tears of joy in our eyes. Suddenly he asked me question, 'Do you drink or not?' I was puzzled and asked, 'Why?' He said, 'He who does not drink is not a gentleman.' To this I replied that in that case I was only half a gentleman. Thereupon I told him about an incident involving the late poet Mirza Ghalib. An English soldier once asked him, 'Are you a true Muslim?' Ghalib pondered for a few moments and then said, 'No, I am only half a Muslim.' He explained that the Muslim religion forbids the eating of pork and the consumption of alcoholic drinks. 'I do not eat pork, but I do drink liquor.' The point of the story was that while I refrained from strong drinks like whisky and rum, I did enjoy an occasional glass of beer. Saigal gave a hearty laugh. After that, whenever we were together I always had a beer while he nursed his scotch. While working in the Ranjit film company, he frequently came to our studio to record his songs, always in the afternoon. On arrival he would come straight to my cabin and put his bottie of scotch in my table drawer. He knew very well that it was safe with me! Normally, there would be about half a dozen rehearsals before thc actual recording. He would have half a peg between rehearsals. His voice became mellower with each rehearsal, and then would come a stage that was the ultimate in beauty. It was my job to catch him on disc at this stage, when every word, every note bore the stamp of rare and rich artistry. All the songs he recorded for Tansen, Surdas and Shahjahan became immortal. One day we ended the session a little early. Saigal came to my room and said, 'Bhaiyaa, I haven't heard you sing for a long time, I am not in the mood to go away so soon. Also I have suffi- cient scotch left in my flask.' I used to compose tunes in those days. Pandit Indra, a top poet of the time, was a great friend of mine. Often he would drop in and we would sit together - I with the harmonium and Panditji with pad and pencil. Between the two of us we composed a number of devotional and love songs. That night I sang a few of them to Saigal. He was soon to play the role of Surdas in the forthcoming film. Some of the songs took his fancy. He spoke to Sardar Chandulal Shah about them. Sardar Chandulal came to our Manager, with a re- quest to requisition my services. He made a very tempting offer. However my previous experience in films had not been at all favourable and I had resolved never to enter films again. So after a couple of days I thanked them but declined the offer. Saigal came to me furious and thundering, 'Why are you being so foolish?' I explained my position to him. To this day I havn't regretted my decision nor did it affect my relations with Saigal. I have very vivid memories of the evenings, when we recorded Madhukar shyam hamare chor, Main nahee makhan khayo (from Sur- das), Diya jalao (from Tansen). Listening to these discs I recall the scenes. Saigal in the centre, flanked by the accompanists, with music director Khemchand Prakash and myself standing in front listening with interest. Saigal used to lose himself completely under the influence of liquor but he never, even in that state, misbehaved or did any- thing not befitting a gentleman. He would be very restless if the alcohol did not have a quick effect on him. One night, after a late recording session, we were driving home from the studio. As we neared Parel, he asked if I knew of any place nearby, where he could have some more booze. He had been drinking the whole even- ing, so I tried to dissuade him and suggested that we proceed straight hone. He said, 'Arre Bhai, what's the use of my drinking the whole day, if I return home sober - all that drink will go waste.' I dropped him at a hotel at Dadar where, I learnt later, he stayed the whole night with a bottle of Saigal's devotion to his work was far above any other artist's. He had a heart of gold and was a faithful friend. He never turned away a needy fellow artist. On several occasions, I saw him dig into his pocket and give away all he had to some unfortunate per- son. At night, if I am alone, I sometimes listen to his songs Balam aavo baso mere man me, Karu kya aasa niras bhayee, So ja Rajkumari so ja and Piya bin nahee aavat chain. I cannot hear without a pang his immortal melody Ukha ke din aba bita nahee.

RMIM Archive Article "234".

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 1

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok[33])

Author: Ragava R. Menon

Fifty years ago from today, just seven months before the country was to win freedom, a musical phenomenon came to its end. Sometime ago, I was reminded of the significance of the occasion by Ajay Nerurkar. Since then, I have been looking around for an interesting article to post for the occasion and soon ran into this crazy book. Looks like it is written by an international professional hailing from Kerala, who came totally under the spell of Saigal's magic. It is not a biography; there are very few facts here, although the author has spoken to a number of people who had interacted with Saigal and they include some interesting characters. It is an account of Saigal's singing, or more accurately, an account of author's subjective reactions to Saigal's music. It is quite badly written, author's Hindi seems to be suspect, the author often goes on and on about his own reflections regarding music, society, and life. Nevertheless, the ardour and fervour with which he has approached his love is admirable and the book has lots of quaint and curiously interesting aspects.

I have decided to post selected chapters from the book. It was published in 1978 by a publishing house that I haven't encounterd often. I suspect the book is out of print. In any case, I hope the selective material I post leads many music lovers to seek out the book. It has some terrific pictures. Ashok ---------- :K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara Ragava R. Menon Clarion Books, New Delhi, 1978 :Contents . Introduction . shadja . rishabha . gandhara . madhyama . pancham . dhaivat . nishad . baabula mora . Appendix: The records of K. L. Saigal . Glossary . Index :Introduction This book has taken a whole lifetime in the making. Information has been slow and difficult to obtain as most of the key men in Saigal's youth and early years were dead and beyond recall. It has been mostly picked, in bits and pieces, a scrap here and a scrap there, over several decades.

Two longish meetings with Saigal himself in the last years of his life have added to my own sense of him. He sang _heer_ to us the first time I met him. He sang softly intoning his syllables returning to an agonizing _madhyama_ that made you wonder whether it was a flute or a voice that you were hearing. He was reticent about himself, laughing off his extraordinary achievements as though it were so much rumour. He did not seem like a man who looked much ahead. He lived largely in the moment.

So he gave you a sense of being all there, a man of the present. All of him. This you could see without having to ask.

His drinking habits fascinate many people. You are very well informed on this subject-whether he drank, how much, and whether he sang better or worse when in his cups. This is an eternal topic of discussion whenever Saigal is mentioned.

His family has been of great help to me in my search of him.

His wife Asharani Saigal bore with my persistent and sometimes stubborn demand for nuances about him and while she broke into tears very often, forgave me with singular kindness.

His daughters, charming and patient, helped me beyond my ability to repay them in this life, or if there is another, in that. His sons-in-law, Ali and Mahendra Chopra, were helpful in the extreme, communicating with a

33Source: K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara

gentle insight the quality of the man into whose family they had cast their lot.

I have been privileged to have several long sessions with the kind and gentle relatives of K. L. Saigal. I can still recall Asharani Saigal's reference to her husband given me in broken words and often choked with sobs, which I have taken the liberty to quote here with somewhat less discontinuity:

"He is as complex as anything God has created. His characteristics were uncommon in every sense. He had a prodigious memory and felt for things that were difficult to understand. You can be his brother, his mother, or his wife, but you could never know him completely. I felt at times as though I were trembling, and at times it was so easy. He wrote the song "mai.n baiThi thi" with his head on my lap, asking for the pen and ink to write its strange words down.

"Later he brought its tune into life on the harmonium. Long after he passed away, I had a pervading sense of his presence in the house. Everywhere he would appear to me and I was disconsolate for years."

I have taxed the kindness of music maestro R. C. Boral with whom I spent a whole day and whose help was principally responsible for this book. The late Pahari Sanyal gave me two full days of his time, singing various Saigal songs and showing me the peculiarities of his style and the techniques Saigal employed. His insights about Saigal locked with several other views I had picked up from diverse sources about Saigal's art and inner nature.

I was given several hours with film producer B. N. Sircar, who told me many anecdotes about Saigal's life at the New Theatres. Principally, however, the truths of Saigal's childhood were given to me by the three astrologers I have mentioned in the book-Badri Prasad Bannerji, Biswanath Rajgarhia, and Yogeshwar Shastri. The relationship between a man and his astrologer must be deemed as classified as with his physician or his lawyer. Yet these men were aware of the importance of my quest for the man they themselves loved and revered. It was only after they were sure that I would not use the information they had given me for anything but honourable purpose that they agreed to tell all they knew. Imtiaz Ahmed was an important link. Although desperately poor, he refused to accept any kind of consideration for the time he spent and the kindness with which he described his earliest memories of the man. It is not possible to repay the debt of gratitude I owe to him.

I have had access to Kanan Devi's compelling account of her life and times told with such wisdom and penetrating understanding in 'Shobarey Ami Nomey', several published interviews of Pankaj Mullick, the moving TV documentary entitled 'Bhulaaye Na Bane' and the passionate interest of the late Ali Bokhari in the

life of his dear friend. I have also had old copies of 'Jayathi' loaned to me by friends in Varanasi, Lucknow, and Allahabad who do not wish to be named.

I would like to say that this book is not a biography of K. L. Saigal. I wait for someone more gifted in the kind of sleuthing needed to write such a book, to do this at a future date. This book is on music. Saigal was all music. He lived it in his life as completely as anyone who has dissolved his existence in any art or craft or science has lived. The pieces of information that I have looked for and obtained have been only those which throw light upon Saigal as a man of music. All other material that I have obtained which does not directly illustrate the timeless discipline which in Indian music has been a source of wonder and fascination to those who have glimpsed it even at a distance, that I have omitted to use. These aspects of the man are not relevant to my enquiry.

It is characteristic of those who have struggled with themselves in acquiring something permanent and indestructible in their natures that they have a certain compassion and understanding of the predicament of human life and effort upon this planet. It is my meeting with many such men and women in the course of my enquiry scattered over several years that made it possible to make music the issue of the book rather than the fortuitous chronology of events and their passage. It was during a discussion with the late Ustad Faiyaz Khan on his several years of contact with Saigal who pointed out to me that Saigal had not entered music on account of the accident of a good voice. He believed that every bit of his musical insight had been acquired.

He said, "Don't be carried away by all this talk of _khuda_ in matters of this nature. _khuda_ cannot help without the man he wants to help doing all the work that needs to be done. Of course he takes the credit." He kept on at the theme that he is not what he seems. Look behind him. He hides a big truth.

The book tries to point out the unsurpassed internal certitude Saigal had in his art and the curious path he followed to acquire it.

If the readers are likewise moved as I have been with this questing man and his passion for music he eventually came to exemplify, this book would have achieved its modest purpose. Rome
R.R.M. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "235".

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 2

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok[34])

Author: Ragava R. Menon

rishabha The first remark you hear if you reminisce about Saigal with someone will be "he was a natural singer," or "his voice was born with him," or "golden voiced he was," and so on. This would be true whether the person had been closely associated with him professionally, or had been a friend or a relative, or merely an admirer from afar. These phrases have become over the years so many cliches about Saigal and have been repeated so often that they have assumed an appearance of truth. As though a golden voice was all he had.

If after hearing such remarks you say nothing, the speaker will go on to point out that no one taught him any music, that he had come in singing and left likewise. There were several apocryphal materials on this. One of them is about an elder brother who was taught some music because he had become ill and needed to be distracted and the young Kundan Lal, it would seem, just sat outside the closed door of the brother's sick chamber and became a musician. No one for instance would dream of calling Pankaj Mullick a natural singer or Krishna Chandra Dey or Sachin Dev Burman or even the greatest classical singers of the time, natural singers. Only Saigal was natural. This statement needs to be examined critically before being accorded credence.

What is a natural singer as opposed to a singer who acquires singing by practice? Was it his singing style, its seeming ease and content that made it earn the definition "natural"? Was his voice golden as it was often described? Was it possible that there was some kind of effort he made, but that no one knew about it?

Was it also possible that the effort he had made was not the usual effort people can recognise and classify as practice or _riaz_ in the music teacher's meaning of the term? Was it likely that the kind of effort he had made was unknown among post people and his effort gad gone beyond the natural frontiers of practice, and had become so much a part of his life that it seemed to be as natural as speech, or life itself? Probably it was a problem of words, inaccurate words being used to describe him and his art.

There are many witnesses to the fact that Saigal was not as simple or feckless as he is made out to be. To be sure, there was a quality of disarming innocence about him that seemed almost childlike in its candour. For instance, he could never be knowing or wily, or self-conscious, about his music. He could not or perhaps he would not discourse about the technicalities of musical phrases or _ragas_ or compositional intricacies. Since he himself admitted to the fact that he did not have the conventional training in music from a teacher, people thought that he did not know, and he did not seem concerned about establishing a reputation for being otherwise. So they took him to be a kind of freak, a phenomenon, a valuable money-spinner for India's infant cinema industry no doubt, but an odd bird. One more reason for this attitude towards him was because he placed no price on his music. He did not consider his music as a bit of property, an investment like a joint-stock company. He gave freely of his music, for there was more left from where it came from. You often hear of singers who will not condescend to open their mouths in song unless you pay them first, and we know from our own experience how careful you have to be to persuade a well-known singer to sing for you even in the most ideal conditions. What a lot of effort and planning would have to be traversed before the promised land of a performance heaves into sight.

34Source: K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara

Saigal was never of that disposition. It took him many years to realise how little capable he was to make his art yield him the highest material benefit. Music was his life and he was always a little surprised at the fact of it, and so never had a feeling of proprietorship over his art. Kanan Devi describes in her autobiography how with a "take" all ready and the camera and crew in place, the set would wait for Saigal to turn up and when they had waited for a long time they would find him, to their surprise, arrived and ready but "lost" in a corner of the vast studio with a harmonium, singing.

He would be so simple and disarming and so completely sincere in his embarrassment for having kept the technicians waiting that no one would have the heart to complain.

This was only one more reason why people called him a natural singer. Most people get their musical achievement after what they believe a gargantuan effort. So they guard it jealously. Saigal did not consider the effort he had put into his art as being much at all. Indeed he did not think that any effort that anyone may conceivably put into the art as enough. If one would not strive without measure, without hope of gain, the art never truly became one's own. And if it is not one's own, one would be guarded and calculating with it and never be natural with it. For, if anything becomes one's self, it shares a little of the "self's" immortality.

For, you can hear him even now almost as often as you could when he was alive almost three decades ago. And today the voice issues the same way from wireless sets and record players all over the country. Sometimes it is softly whispered about as audible as a wish in your heart and at other times brilliantly like great flashes of light.

A long time ago, someone told me that when in a _hhor_ or _bhajan_, Saigal held the top _shadj_ for a little more than three beats, the sound made her dizzy. Yes, it was a dizzying voice, if you went it for that sort of metaphor and it swung a little bit sometimes, swaying a little in its middle like a flame taken in a light wind. And all of it was voice. There were no opaque patches in it, all of it equally lambent and pure and fused with radiance.

Sometimes it was the _tanpura_ that you heard for half the turn of the record, its _jawari_ slightly muted so that its twang was subdued and then his voice would emerge from somewhere in the silence beyond accompaniment and lead you gently by the hand with infinite tenderness into the soft moist interior of the his song and in those four minutes made you believe that there must be a God that made us and the wondrous universe of his song.

You became peaceful with the knowledge of sorrow or despair or wonder. You never returned empty handed. And he was always truthful, sincere, never trying for an effect. There was never one statement anywhere in his song that did not passionately mean. And then he would make the most daring understatements. And you believed in him because he did not say it all. He respected your intelligence, gave you credit for feeling, and cautiously refrained from feeling all the way for you. Naturally he made you a partner with him in his song and so transformed you emotionally into a singer like he was, and you were grateful to him for this consideration.

Naturally his accompaniment was always restrained and evocative, rather than loud and assertive. It was always a mere _tanpura_ and a harmonium and _table_ that accompanied his songs outside the films. If there was an orchestra, it always stood aside to let him pass between it. He would sing _kafi_, _khamaj_, or _desh_, he would take a line of _alaap_ and made you wince for wanting more, he would fill with light and shade the flat commonplace compositions and tip their turns and corners with such deftly-cut edges that the phrases stood out like slim minarets, from the surface of the song.

He was one of the most vitally male singers of the Indian cinema in his manner of singing as much as his

voice. Think of a voice with the most elusive register. In pitches where an Indian voice would sound tenor, he was baritone, baritone in the lower tetrachord and a twanging tenor in the upper.

Think of his voice with layers in it, which in the pianissimos, was huskily laminated. Then imagine this voice as being its own accompaniment, so that against a background of complete silence, a single note from it would glimmer as though it had a halo round it. Then there was a threat in it, a threat of concealed power like a coiled spring, so that however delicately the voice coaxed and pleaded with you, it always seemed like the tenderness of a very strong man caressing a child.

It is difficult to describe his singing in other metaphors. If you to think of nature, his singing did not connote a garden brimming with summer flowers. It was more the magnificence of mountain peaks, or the loneliness of heath and meadow. If you thought of perfume, he was not Chanel. He was lavender and cologne. And if you went in for textiles, he was the finest quality muslin, never silk or polyester. There was a manly isolation in his singing manner. Even if it were a simple love song he was singing, it was always stoic and tearless.

Today when singing stars with hired voices howl and sob, you marvel at the terse, compelling musical demands Saigal made upon his heroines that made their eyes sparkle with delight. His singing and speaking voices merged imperceptibly without discontinuity, for it was the same voice that sang and spoke the same exquisite intonation. He spoke with beaded definition in prose, sliding quickly into song. You were content.

Even when the tale was tragic and everything had soured and turned rancid on him like in 'Devdas' when he was quickly guttering into death, his sorrow and despair had a grandeur in his singing of them. He would never whimper or be peevish with his song. He would sing at anchor and convey his meaning simply and clearly in some of the most poignant musical idioms ever heard.

He would bring the wild, freewheeling timbre of the street singer and juxtapose it with a phrase of such polished competence that it made you gasp with astonishment. Perhaps he did this on purpose to set off the endearing contrast of manners, for there is an atmosphere of focussed intention in all his singing. Nobody could have composed for him the quality of what he actually sang.

Who could have made him pointedly scan his metre with a slight edge on the _tala_ and who above all could have taught him to coax those despairing _dhaivats_ and glittring _gandharas_ from any of the _ragas_ he chose to sing. Do you remember a certain _madhyam_ from his voice rising in a swelling wave out of the _tanpura_ and he singing it as though he had discovered that note for the first time in the history of our music? Can you recall the delight and the joy of that note lovingly meditated and sung with infinite compassion?

Who taught him the amazing economy of his style-just so much and no more? How did he learn to economise his variations with such surgical precision? And what about those pauses, those rich prescient silences? Where did he pick those up?

It was the simple things he did in his music that moved you, not his virtuosity, nor his seeming effort. His singing was patent and self-evident and needed no musical sophistication, nor an interpreter to experience. For he would leap straight at us at our inner beings and our inner beings are mute and need no language. This must have been the reason why they thought he was natural-a natural singer. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "236".

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 3

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok[35])

gandhara In describing Saigal as a singer we tend to become lyrical about his voice. When he was described as "golden voiced" it was a manner of expressing a difficult and ineffable experience. But yet people who have heard him many times and personally, and whose experience of him was not exclusively through the films and records, do not give his voice the emphasis we would expect.

For instance, in Kanan Devi's moving autobiography 'Shobarey Ami Nomey" she says that Saigal's voice was not what is generally understood by the good voice. Pankaj Mullick, the doyen among Bengali musicians, and whose association with Saigal was both long and close, describes in a recent interview that Saigal's voice was a tenor with a true pitch and a three-octave span. Again, he does not expatiate on the subject of the beauty of his voice. A true pitch and a three-octave span are not exactly rarities in Indian music although Saigal's voice is contended to be one, if that, in a million. There are others who also think of his voice in other terms.

Take Imtiaz Ahmed, for instance. He used to live in Moradabad when Saigal left home to seek his fortune and arrived in Moradabad, a mere lad in his late teens. Imtiaz Ahmed recalls his memory of their first meeting. He is now in his seventies and lives with his son who is a motor mechanic in the Jama Masjid area of Delhi.

But at that time Imtiaz used to be a _sarangi_ player. Nothing special. Except for an occasional solo, he was mostly accompanying various local celebrities during miscellaneous musical events in the town, had some tuitions, was also a _hakim_ on the side, and sold Unani medicine in the Katra.

He recalls accompanying Abdul Karim Khan on one occasion. This was an accident and a good fortune. The Khan Saheb's own _sarangi_ player had missed his train connection and the performance had been scheduled for the same night. The local college, perhaps it was the school, Imtiaz does not clearly remember, under whose auspices the Khan Saheb was singing, needed a willing and quick substitute.

Imtiaz remembers the occasion well not only because he was playing for the first time for a celebrity of the Khan Saheb's dimensions, but the Station Master of Moradabad who was an Englishman and his wife had attended the occasion. It was much later that he found that the Station Master's wife had taught the young Saigal to read, write, and speak English.

It was a memorable occasion for the _sarangi_ player for what was he but a small man dodging along from hand to mouth, and this was Abdul Karim Khan at the apex of his fame, still as slim and delicately fashioned as a boy, luxuriously turbaned and faintly smelling of the _attar_ of roses and with those intense soulful eyes which he was never to forget as long as he lived. He had watched the Khan Saheb through the corner of his eyes throughout the recital while he tried to match tone and _gamak_ of the Khan Saheb's grieving _kalyan_.

Out in front, beyond the rim of the makeshift stage, sat this lad whom he had several times seen about on the railway platform. His main impression at the time was the boy's obvious youth and lankiness. His legs, he remembers, were not just long but, as he sat on the ground with one of them folded under him and the other raising a knee to his chin, they seemed like the legs of a grass-hopper full of joints and difficult to put away.

In those days, just in front of the stage, Imtiaz explained, where the performers sat, the floor was covered with

35Source: K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara

white sheets on which sat the undistinguished admirers of the performer, the passionate music lovers who were also poor, the students form the local schools and an odd sprinkling of office-bearers of the function. Behind them were rows of upholstered chairs and wooden slatted ones, where sat the wealthy, the aristocrats, the civil servants, and the railway officials.

Imtiaz remembered the young man in white _pyjamas_ and the simple home-spun _kurta_ gazing enraptured, his face set in a look of bemused wonder. There was something different about him.

Imtiaz found it difficult to describe it. His physique seemed delicate, his fingers long, and his hands exceptionally moulded.

His hair was still thick and wavy, parted probably in the middle and often a lock got displaced, giving him the look of a poet. Imtiaz did not know that Saigal had turned bald very early in his life and the 'Street Singer' of the thirties was already almost bald.

It was on an afternoon not long after the Abdul Karim concert that Imtiaz went to the railway station to post a letter and found that same boy sitting on a pile of mail bags lying on the platform. The place was deserted; the next train was not due for hours. Probably the month was March, still cool in the shade. Perhaps the _patjhad_ had already begun, for there were piles of leaves on the platform and leaves everywhere on the ground.

As he passed the seated boy, Imtiaz discovered that he was singing. This attracted his attention and as he walked past the boy to the pillar box, his ears were glued behind him to catch every phrase that came to him.

The boy was singing _jhinjoti_, a _thumri_ which Abdul Karim was yet to make famous a few years later. At that time the song had not attracted the attention it did in the 30s. What struck Imtiaz the most was not that the boy should be found to be singing the very song for which he had accompanied the Khan Saheb on the _sarangi_, but the way it seemed the lad was trying to reproduce the unforgettable cadences of the song.

Imtiaz stood behind a steel girder and shamelessly eavesdropped. The platform lay hushed in the noon-day silence and every phrase came to him complete without the least blemish.

The boy seemed unaware of everything around him and seemed to be trying out the song for himself.

Imtiaz was struck by two things at once. The first was the simple authority with which he seemed to sing the song, then a certain something which he found difficult to define, a quality that seemed to make the song his own, and not something he had heard and was trying to sing. He does not recall being impressed by the voice at the time except that it seemed a very capable voice with deep reserves. Although the notes followed the Abdul Karim Khan version of the _thumri_, the same on the _gandhar_, all the _meends_ in their proper places, yet it did not seem as though he had been taught that song by someone else. It did not seem as though he was trying to imitate the Khan Saheb. The song seemed to be pitched somewhere higher than he would have expected, for he sang in the style of those who sing in open places using the wind to his advantage and bending his head a little to sing into the hollow of the air around him. The voice seemed to be very knowing and canny.

Imtiaz waited till the song seemed to be over. Apparently the boy did not know the _antara_ or did not care to sing it. When he realized that he was not alone, he trailed off. Imtiaz walked up to him, smiling. Seeing him approach, the lad stood up and stopped short of joining his hands in greeting and did the _adaab_ gesture of the Muslim. In a little while they walked together in the cool and dappled sunlight, the future 'Devdas' and 'Tansen' of the Indian cinema and the humble _sarangi_ player of Moradabad,

Imtiaz took the boy home to his house in the lane where even now _jalebis_ are made in the first light of the morning and cows wander about all day in search of pickings. His room was high up on top of a rickety building where you noticed the only article of luxury when you sat on the floor. This was a magnificent view of an endless expansion of blue sky.

"Whom did you learn with?" Imtiaz asked.

"No one," the boy replied. "I do not know any music."

"But you seemed so sure," Imtiaz countered.

"Just imitating," he replied.

Imtiaz says he disbelieved this completely. It was not possible to imitate and yet give such a sure and distinct flavour, such a personal quality to the line of song he had just heard. Those _meends_ sounded as though a _been_ was playing, strong, vigourous, precise, carrying, without being loud. He knew only too well how both in the _sarangi_ and the _been_ the many years of unbroken concentration and practice that were necessary before the _sarangi_ or the _been_ learned to speak for themselves. That was the reason also why, he said, so few could really play these instruments as they should be played. He knew that he himself had not done the work that was necessary so that the instrument may begin to live on its own.

Imtiaz had begun with _raga_ and performance rather too early. All he could now do was not to go _besur_. Not to go _besur_, with his instrument after all these years. Only the first step in the art of the instrument-that was where he had reached and that was where he had remained-only _surel_. And as for the voice, it was so much harder. It was a living thing-the voice, changing with every breath you took and with every year you lived. So that, as you grew older, it must be possible in spite of age and weakness to be more musical, if less tuneful.

Imtiaz himself had aspired to sing. His father Altaf used to play at Rampur and Allahabad and was quite well-known in Agra.

Yet he had not dared to enter the world of the singer largely because he used to hear his father's loud lamenting about the years he had wasted. And yet there was this young Punjabi with such a sure aim, whose fast passage of notes was not the desperate blur his own was on the _sarangi_, but cadences which, even though in double time, seemed so incredibly leisurely and almost in slow motion.

He determined to investigate. His wife made some tea, and Imtiaz took out his _sarangi_ and very carefully tuned it. The boy sat on the floor unmoving, looking at him raptly.

Then Imtiaz asked, "Do you know any other song?"

"Only some _bhajans_ and _ghazals_," he replied.

Imtiaz doodled on the _sarangi_ played a few phrases of _bhim_, slid into _tilang_ and he could see that the lad was dying to sing. So he said, "Sing something, anything."

Then he sang, almost whispering, it seemed, his lips hardly moving, tailoring the volume of his voice to the small room in which they sat, a Ghalib _ghazal_ that seemed to be in _abhogi kanada_: "daayam paDa hu.n tere dar par nahi.n ho."

He sang simply, each phrase carefully pronounced, the pauses delicately holding up the tension of the note in

which he had paused, carefully turning around on the _pancham_, his voice hissing as though read hot from recent practice. He seemed unconcerned about the need to press his music to its utmost. He sang as though the words will look after the music, sometimes almost speaking the lines, booming with the resonance of the note in which he had almost, but not quite, spoken the words one after another.

It was then that Imtiaz had an opportunity to examine at close quarters the rapt and distant eyes, lost in the _swara_ veiled in song, the raised hand as though in supplication and description. The notes holding the words aloft, the words which Ghalib's sorrow had fashioned in exquisite quatrains and which now issued from him in portentous statements of self-evident truths.

He seemed to Imtiaz almost beautiful as he sang and his voice, thought Imtiaz, could not be separated from the song even in fancy. They existed together. And what a capable thing it was. Even at what should be full throttle in the ascent to the _tar gandhar_, the voice seemed relaxed, incidental, and at half cock.

Imtiaz suddenly felt uneasy despite the ecstatic bond between the _sarangi_ and the voice. It was afterwards that he remembered that the boy had begun to sing without preparations, quickly and directly, without any adjustment of his pitch, or asking Imtiaz on what note the _sarangi_ had been tuned. Probably the lad was right. He had perhaps not been trained under a teacher, or a particular _gharana_, for what he did with his music was so different from any likely training.

When the young Saigal got up to go it was dark. Outside, the stars of spring had already risen. He watched the lad going awkwardly down the steep dark well of the staircase into the night. Imtiaz felt strangely elated and also somewhat sad. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "237".

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 4

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok[36])

madhyama To those of us, for whom music is a matter of rich and helpless response, there exists in it a fathomless mystery. There are many who, while feeling this mystery, this hint of boundlessness and infinitude in it, mistrust and fear it. Most of us are moved by music, sometime torn by it, but somehow we are anxious to find means by which this boundlessness and mystery can be contained, subdued, and measured.

The West discovered this quite early in its musical history and took steps to guard against its implications. It devised a fixed scale, calling it C, D, E, and so on, based on predetermined vibrations per second, began encouraging instrumentalisation of music and readjusted the value of voice to the status of a musical instrument. As a result, music became more and more an extension of the bewildering development of technology, whether mechanical or electronic.

A still further precaution to contain the sovereignty of the individual, creative spirit was to emphasise orchestral arrangements and choral performances where groups of instruments, sometimes hundred or more, or groups of voices, interpreted a composition. The solo sung with subsidiary accompaniment became only an incidental part of music. Not until popular music in the Afro-American medium arrived on the scene did the solo singer or player find his true place in creative performance.

This situation arose largely by the compulsions of the total industrialization of the Western milieu. For despite the fixing of the musical scale and the writing down of music, the older, original objectives of European music were very different from more contemporary concepts in Western classical music. The carefully graduated sharing of privilege and responsibility between composer and performer, and between conductor and soloist, is a case in point. Western music fought improvisation tooth and nail and won the battle in favour of the composer who retained the right to choose the notes and even interpret them. The performer as a result was maimed, creatively speaking by the mystique of the composer and the authority of the conductor.

Not until popular form entered Western music, through men and women like Al Jolson, Bessie Smith, Frank Sinatra, Mildred Bailey, Mahalia Jackson, Judy Garland, Nat King Cole, right down to Barbara Streissand and Elvis Presley, and Ray Charles did Western music return to personal creation and to the magic of immediacy. Indian music never needed to go through these crises.

It stuck to the measure of voice from the first day and kept its music to the _raga_ mould, and so the music remained evolutionary and organic in form and content, and not a matter of finished creation like a painting or a piece of sculpture. On top of this the classical music of India had developed light and popular forms without violating the _raga_ or the rhythmic integrity of the system so that it remained possible at all times to touch the musically illiterate as much as enchant the highbrow without losing any part of the music's essential wholeness.

So that even today, despite great changes, some of them irreversible, taking place within the country, Indian music is ill at ease with mere innovation and novelty of form and cautious of the invidious seduction of technology and mass production. Indian classical music concerts rarely employ more than four or five persons and the sound of the concert is always small even with electronic amplification. Even if there is an orchestral accompaniment in some kinds of light music, notably in the movies, the orchestra is invariably derivative and

36Source: K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara

survives on the virtue of the voice. So that if a performance of Indian music is able to hold the attention of a large audience and enrapture it, it has to use resources that are largely invisible, but not any less real because of it.

Saigal during his lifetime used to be the idol of the millions. He was known and loved across the land even places and among people who did not understand the language in which he sang. His attraction arose out of the subservience of his singing technique to meaning, whether the meaning was the pure music of the _raga_ or whether it was the poetry of the words. In any case he rarely ever used his voice as a means whereby he could extol its range and timbre or show off his ability as a singer.

Discussing Saigal in a moving TV documentary entitled 'Bhulaye Na Baney', Pankaj Mullick relates how seriously Saigal took the meaning of the song he was learning to sing, insisting each time Pankaj Mullick taught him a Bengali song for a film that the exact nuance of the meaning of the text be explained to him so that he might be able to sing it true.

Two levels of meaning flow effortlessly out of Saigal's singing style without a trace of affectation, and he took great care not to neglect any one of these levels of meaning to extol the other. The first was the _raga_ or the melody mould in which the song was composed. This was always meticulously and significantly treated not in any great detail to be sure, as the records in those days were shellac and only a little more than three minutes long. But the _raga_'s sheer call to feeling was never omitted, the text of the song was locked into the _raga_ in a skilful way. It was this quality of his technique that distracted his listener's attention from the splendid skill and valour of his musical accomplishment. Saigal's art was the art that disguises art. He had made his musical accomplishment so inevitable that it seemed almost easy.

It was as a last resort and because no one was able to specify the nature of his attraction and power that people put it down to his voice-the golden voice as it used to be called. But if you examined the voice independently of the song, and this is not as easy as it sounds, you will soon notice that there was nothing spectacular about the voice at least on a superficial examination. You may be led to believe and conclude that it was not even quite a singing voice. It was more a speaking voice and that of course was why the voice spoke so uncommonly well. Pankaj Mullick's voice was far more rounded and singing than the famous golden voice, and K. C. Dey's was certainly more powerful.

It was Saigal who for the first time in Indian music welded the music to speech so smoothly, so inevitably, and without a trace of self-consciousness. Consider how little singing there was in the song "sukh ke dukh ke ab din bitat nahi," in 'Devdas' and how like speech the recorded version of the nursery rhyme in the film 'President' sounds which begins: "hullo, aao bachon." How the voice bubbles with suppressed merriment as it tightly traverses the notes in which it is composed. How easily he could halt the musical march of the song, fade into speech, and make his voice seem to smile and make it all seem an integral part of the song's structure. This was one of the reasons why during Saigal's lifetime while people raved about him, very few people woke up to the fact of his virtuosity. This was insufficiently understood. People puzzled over him but never could grasp him. He simply sang too knowingly for a film star. But when he sang, it seemed so natural and so easy that listeners never became aware of any physical accomplishment i him apart from the fact of an appealing voice. He sang uncommonly well long before he came to the films and right through his public career as an actor he sang much below his true capabilities in all the films in which he acted.

If you ask about Saigal's beginnings, each one claims to have been responsible for bringing Saigal into prominence. For example, B. N. Sircar, Pankaj Mullick, R. C. Boral, Devaki Bose, Phani Majumdar, were all men who have been closely linked with Saigal's destiny as a singing star almost at the dawn of India's film history, certainly of talking pictures.

B. N. Sircar owned the New Theatres. He was a kind of Jack Warner of the Indian film industry. He employed Saigal on a salary and a contract with the New Theatres. Pankaj Mullick was already a legend in Bengal as a singer, a composer, and an innovator in Indian music. And this was well before Saigal's entry into films. It was Pankaj Mullick who for instance employed western musical instruments in the structure of Indian light music with great beauty and wit.

Then there was R. C. Boral. A scion of an illustrious tradition of composers and musicians in whose home anyone who was anybody in Indian music and theatre met, sang, or performed. In his home in P. C. Boral Street in Calcutta, marbled, spacious, dotted with palm fronds and whose walls were lined with the portraits of the legendary faces of Bengali theatre and cinema, there is even today a compelling atmosphere, a kind of noumena, a host of unseen presences from theatrical and musical history. R. C. Boral remembers Saigal vividly, the first glimpse of Bhola of 'Street Singer.'

The late Harish Chandra Bali used to be a frequent visitor at P. C. Boral Street. Often, he remembers, Bali used to speak of a young man whom he thought was a singularly gifted singer with the hope that he could be brought to Calcutta and put to work in the films. Bali thought that the young man would make a mark in the cinema.

The Bengal of the 1920s was like the Italy at the time of Verones and Leopardi. Writers and poets of the eminence of Sarat Chandra, Madhusudan, Tagore, and Bankim had already made Bengal real for the Bengalis. The language was being reborn into a new delight, her scenery was being transformed into landscape, and her people making new values and new perceptions and discriminations. The transforming presence of Tagore straddled this new world. The voices, too, the mouth-watering tenors and the game baritones of _baul_ and _bhatiali_ and _kirtans_, Rabidndra Sangeet_ and _adhunik_ were budding and proliferating and budding again in every direction.

In this world where every other voice was a singing voice of disquieting beauty, purity and range, where skill and commitment of a notable kind was not exactly rare, it was difficult to visualize a penurious Punjabi from distant Jullundur, with no training in classical music on Bali's own admission, as a likely candidate for the distinguished roster of New Theatres. Consider the names. There was Pankaj Mullick, who was already a household name in Bengal with his keen perception into classical Indian music and also Western orchestration and harmony, a singer with a velvet voice whose round, rich tone and clear vibrato had transformed the sound of both _Rabindra Sangeet_ and _adhunik_ into a world of singular musical possiblities. This man had set fashions and standards in music that were not easy to match, or indeed surpass. Then there was Krishna Chandra Dey, blind, with a voice whose strength and power shivered the wireless sets and issued out of the gramophones of the 1930s like the call of a conch-shell at vespers.

Then there was Pahari Sanyal, an accomplished musician with a degree in classical music from the Marris College of Music in Lucknow, who was already a concert performer with a durable reputation when he joined the New Theatres. The women were the voices of Kanan Devi, Kamala Jharia, Juthika Ray, Akhtari Bai Faizabadi; the young Siddheswari Devi was already getting to be known in Bengal and the princely states of northern India. Yes, there was competition, lots of competition.

So when Harish Chandra Bali mentioned this unknown man, Boral was vague and non-committal, pointing out that to find the merest niche in films even as an extra with ambitions to sing, it was mandatory to have a sure grounding in classical music and since the young man had none, it was not of much use to try him out in the cinema. The competition was too great and too aggressive to survive in the industry when even the best faltered. Each time Bali visited Calcutta and stayed with Boral, the subject of Saigal was brought up, and each time the matter would end inconclusively.

Those were the days before the birth of All India Radio. It used to be known as the Indian Broadcasting Company, and R. C. Boral worked as a producer in its studios. At that time Boral spent the whole day at the Radio. Returning late in the evening he used to stop his taxi near the place in the Esplanade where the Metro cinema was later built, to buy a _paan_, after which he went to Tollygunje to the studios of the New Theatres. From Tollygunje he returned late at night to his house at Boral Street.

When Bali used to be his guest he would have very often retired for the night by the time Boral returned. Nevertheless he used to open the door to Bali's room just a little to peep in and see if his guest was settled for the night and, if awake, exchange a few words before Boral himself retired for the night.

On one occasion, Boral recalls, how waiting at Esplanade for his daily _paan_ he heard a voice behind him that attracted his attention. Almost without knowing it he turned his head in the direction of the voice. A little distance away there was a tallish man talking to another among the crowd preparing to cross the road. Boral remembers merely glancing at him and then resuming his journey to Tollygunje.

He had returned later than usual that night having walked a little while on the banks of the Hooghly on his way back, and found that Bali had arrived sometime during the day, and had already turned in for the night. As was his habit he looked into his room on the way to his own and found Bali in bed, on the floor near him slept a man completely covered by a sheet. Boral gestured to ask who he was and Bali gestured back that he would explain the next day.

The young man who stood before Boral the next morning, his palms joined in humble greeting, was the same that Boral remembered seeing the previous evening at the Esplanade. Seeing him at close quarters, he seemed taller and leaner. Now he stood before him looking uncertain in aa _pyjana_ and _kurta_, his feet bare. Bali introduced him. Kudan Lal Saigal was able to sing, he said, rather well in fact. Boral asked him to sit down. But the young man would not. So he stood. Since it was about seven in the morning, Boral thought of _todi_ or _bhairav_ or _ramkali_ and asked the man if he might hear him sing. Saigal replied that he knew no _ragas_ but he would be able to sing if he was shown what it was. So Boral asked him to sing whatever he knew.

So the man began singing almost at once standing up without any accompaniment in his bare voice. Boral is not able to recall what it was that the young Saigal sang that morning. Perhaps it was _bhairavi_ or perhaps it might have been _asavari_. He thinks that the latter was more likely, for Saigal sang _asavari_ uncommonly well. In any case it was a morning _raga_. Of that Boral is sure.

To say that Boral was surprised that morning would be an understatement. He was astonished and puzzled. It was nothing that he had expected. If the young man who stood before him singing impressively with his lips bare moving had sung like an _ustad_, or had exhibited an unforgettably beautiful voice, or if he had been a blinding technician and virtuoso, Boral could have dealt with the situation very easily. God knows he looked for nothing in the style of young aspirants who wanted to break into the big time by their skill and musicianship. Composers, performers, ventriloquists, he had seen them all. It was a _bhajan_ the young man had chosen to sing. The voice was sure, very precise, finely focussed on the note. He did not seem capable of wasting a particle of breath, and had a timbre that rang like a _been_, _been_ whose every string had been carefully and magically tuned. Although there was not even a whistle accompanying him there seemed as though an invisible _sarangi_ was following his every move prowling about near his notes nudging him along to elaborate. As the young man went on singing with the most eloquent and hardly audible _gamaks_, Boral suddenly felt that this young man was not a singer but troubadour. His _swara_ beckoned like a church bell or like a Mullah's call from the mosque for _namaz_.

Slowly his voice trailed away and there was silence. Almost simultaneously the boy fell at his feet in a long

supplicating gesture, asking as though for help, for succour, for the certitude of a sustaining hand. The song and this gesture were as though all of one piece, and Boral felt strangely moved.

Boral does not remember after all these years, whether it wa a _bhairavi_ that Saigal had sung that morning, but he feels that it had something to do with him making "babula mora" the theme song of 'Street Singer.'

That Saigal was a strangely compelling singer was left in no doubt that morning in P. C. Boral Street. But what use could be made of him in the films was a question to which Boral could not find a ready answer. In Bengali films in those years the face of the hero was the face of Promothesh Barua, smoldering, delicate of build, almost feminine in his comeliness and a profile that seemed cast in alabaster. Saigal was already balding. He was tall by the standards of the time, rather large-boned and lanky like an adolescent as though he had yet a lot to grow. His face besides did not have the characteristics of veiled passion which was the stamp of the romantic hero of the 1930s. The noisy, wild, and flamboyant hero of today was unthinkable in those days.

In 'Shesh Uttar', in 'Mukti', the intense face of Barua had already etched itself on the hearts and minds of the Bengalis. The other names of leading men of the decade were Johar Ganguly, Dhiraj Bhattacharya, and Durga Das Bandipadhyaya of 'Vidyapati' fame. There was Pahari Sanyal and Ashok Kumar, all men highly endowed in beauty of face and a certain delicacy and refinement of person.

On superficial examination Saigal did not fill the bill. His face and manners were like his music remarkable examples of understatement. He would not say it all, nor indeed look it all.

Besides he was still a Punjabi. How was he to be fitted into the mould of a culture that had blown in Bengal from Shantiniketan.

All these elements were matters to which Boral could not find easy answers. It was difficult for Boral to conceive that this young man who stood before him was a _sadhak_ and that such men do not go through their lives on their inheritance, but on the strength of the transformations that they have wrought upon themselves and the pledges they have redeemed.

This realisation, however indirectly and subtly, did not take long to come and with it came Saigal's dizzy rise to fame. But on that mellow morning on P. C. Boral Street the problem was a practical one. How was this waif, this foundling to be affianced to the New Theatres. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "238".

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 5

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok[37])

pancham The first step was to speak to B. N. Sircar. It he agreed, the rest of his colleagues would be easy to bend. A few days later Boral took the young Saigal with him to the New Theatres studios at Tollygunje.

Seating him in the foyer outside Sircar's office Boral went in. His advocacy of Saigal was concise but sufficiently descriptive to make, he hoped, some impression on the Great Moghul of the Indian cinema. He also introduced a very slight but inadvertent touch of assurance that the young but new find will be a success in the films. It was only at the point where he felt he had to make some remarks on how or where he hoped he could use the talent of this young man that Boral was stumped.

Sircar listened patiently and impassively. When Boral at last paused in his arguments, Sircar smiled and said that since music was Boral's field and since it was as a musician that he was thinking of this young man, this decision was for Boral himself to make. This was enough for Boral. It was a nod of approval.

Boral took Saigal to the audition room of the New Theatres and seated him on a piece of matting on the floor and gave him the first harmonium he found there to accompany himself. Now Saigal had a way with the harmonium. Boral had not at that time heard him play the harmonium. He merely assumed that he should have some accompaniment if the others were going to hear him and since no one knew what he proposed to sing he thought the best piece of equipment would be the harmonium.

When Saigal played the harmonium the instrument did not much follow him literally note for note, as urge him on and on with lavish tenderness from phrase to phrase. There was a magic in it. Sitting there on the floor Saigal played the instrument trying to lose himself in it. Hearing the sound, people began to collect from all over the place and almost suddenly, imperceptibly at first, he began to sing.

It was a _bhajan_. Delicious sweeping _meends_ began to arc gently over the song like so many rainbows. Precise little variations delicately modelled, never more than two or three _matras_ of metre but each phrase developing the theme, in short but sure little measures, as though with a vernier.

People heard him dumb-struck. There was nothing mysterious about it. It was plain as a paint. But you could not take your ears off it. It pulled you steadily like a current in a stream.

You had very little of your own will with it. You just have up and let the music have its way.

Boral does not remember exactly what _raga_ was sun that evening by Saigal. Perhaps it was _yaman_, or it would also have been a variation of _bageshri_. A little distance away in a separate cubicle the blind K. C. Dey was being made up. He heard Saigal's voice through two closed doors and half a corridor and becoming restless asked to be led to the audition room. Everyone was standing stranger [?], not daring to move, as spell-bound around this new singing. Saigal passed from a _bhajan_ to a _khayal_ and then to a _ghazal_. K. C. Dey waited till the music was over, and then he moved forward led by his assistant and stretching out his arms he laid both his hands on the head of the sitting Saigal in a well-known gesture of benediction.

Saigal signed a contract on a salary with the New Theatres.

37Source: K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara

His star had appeared on the horizon. Very soon thereafter the public began to hear a new voice. First tentatively in the first talkie produced by the New Theatres called 'Mohabbat Ke Ansoo,' and then 'Subah Ke Sitare' and 'Zinda Lassh,' then the story of Rami and Chandi that was a hit. But none of these films opened Saigal's path to fame until in 'Devdas.'

It was the Bengali language 'Devdas' which Promothesh Barua had made famous. Jamuna had taken the female lead and Barua the tragic Devdas. Kanan Devi was originally scheduled to play the female role of Chandra, as she had already become a marquee name in Bengali cinema. But Barua failed to get her. Madan Pictures had a contract with Kanan which had a few months to run and she was reluctant to dishonour it.

Imagine the Hindi version of 'Devdas' with Saigal and Kanan Devi. Two performers with music in their genes. What an unforgettable experience in music and drama that film would have been. But destiny had decreed it otherwise. Jamuna acted with Barua and later with Saigal.

Not until 'Street Singer' and its Bengali 'Saathi' were the immortal pair fated to team together. And what a memorable complement they were to each other! Both strangely gifted, mysteriously illuminated, going through their paces in their films together with a delight and abandon, which in that era of staginess and mannered acting was like a breath of fresh air to the audience. They fell in love with the pair, and anxiously waited for them to appear together.

But this was still in the future. Let us return to the Bengali 'Devdas' and examine how it triggered the destiny of Saigal.

One Saturday afternoon R. C. Boral was working in his office in the New Theatres studios giving the finishing touches to the two songs he was composing for the film 'Devdas.' There was no one else in the studio at the time. Most of the film had already been shot and the reels reposed in their cans. But there was still the brothel scene to be shot and these two songs were to go into that scene. Devdas was to arrive at this brothel and one of the other visitors in the brothel was to sing the song.

Boral was busy with these songs when Saigal was announced. Finding that Boral was working at the songs of 'Devdas,' Saigal asked him whether he could not give the songs a try. All he needed he claimed was a little help with his Bengali and he would be able to make a good job of them. Boral answered that since Saigal's experience of Bengali and his knowledge of it was so rudimentary his pronunciation would fail the song. But Saigal pleaded he would try hard and practise it and get the desired effect.

Since the young man was so earnest and so touchingly persuasive Boral let him try the song. No harm would be done by Saigal learning the song, he thought. Boral had composed the songs with Pankaj Mullick in mind and had left room in the score for those geometrical ascents and descents, the cooing portamentos that had endeared him to Bengal long before Saigal had appeared on the scene. But merely letting him learn the song would do no one any harm; even if his pronunciation and the song became too much for him. Also when the following Monday came by Saigal could sing the songs to the others and the compositions would gain a kind of form on account of his singing them.

It would then be easy for everyone else to decide the merits of the songs and devise the choreography that will accompany them. So Boral taught the songs to the young singer, one by one, helping him with their right intonation and delivery. The two songs were "kaharey je jadathey chai" and "goalab huey uthuk phutey." Saigal demanded to learn the meaning of the songs and carefully absorbed the mood of the scene in which they were to be sung. The scene he was told was to be a brothel. The songs Saigal decided therefore had to possess a delicate and subtly blended air of illicit wildness about them. There had to be passion but delicately tempered with musical sophistication. Not too much to overwhelm, but enough to command respect. All

weekend Saigal struggled with the songs, the tone and richness of the words, their ring and timbre, the poetics of its language.

When on Monday morning Saigal sang the songs accompanying himself on the harmonium in the New Theatres audition room, what Boral heard intrigued and delighted him. Something had happened to the songs. He had conceptualized them in the deep unguent voice of Pankaj Mullick. With Saigal the song had become Provencal [?]. It was pitched appealingly high, and seemed to be full of a residual disquiet and a wild calling tone that seemed to beckon despairingly. All this was not intended in the forms of the compositions as Boral remembered it.

Saigal had added nothing to it in a technical sense, yet it was different, different in a way that seemed unrepeatable. Its feeling darted about beneath the surface of the notes and the meaning of the words became like so many aching promises unrequited and full of wonder.

The pronunciation of Saigal's Bengali was imperfect. It was eastern U.P., somewhat Bihari, in its vowels. It certainly had flaws, a long way away from being unrecognisably Bengali [?]. But it was the character of the song that completely transformed.

Pankaj declined to sing them as the song did not fit in with his vocal qualities. At that time Saigal was still new.

Several years and many films later, with the growth of an abiding and deep friendship, Pankaj and Saigal sang the same songs. But at that time the difference seemed insurmountable. Boral realised nothing could be done to the songs any more. They had given themselves birth through Saigal's voice and now could no longer be unborn and return to the place they came from.

But what was to be done to the pronunciation of the Bengali words of the song? How was that to be altered? Would not the audience hearing the songs on the screen be outraged that in their beloved 'Devdas' someone should sing songs as though he had learnt the language. All these considerations worried R. C. Boral.

Every day as the weeks wore on and no one knew what was to be done, Saigal kept struggling with the language and the pronunciation. A few weeks later Boral heard that Sarat Chandra Chatterjee was visiting Calcutta from his retreat on the banks of the quiet Roopnarayan where he was spending his last years. As the author of 'Devdas,' Boral thought, it would be both wise and practical to ask Sarat Chandra for his advice on this dilemma.

Accepting the New Theatres invitation, Sarat Chandra arrived at the studios one evening not long after reaching Calcutta. Boral and his colleagues explained the predicament to the author.

Then Saigal came in to sing to the creator of 'Devdas.' Raptly, with his eyes closed, Sarat Chandra heard the songs as Saigal carefully built up the theme. The novelist at once recognised the unsurpassed authority of the singer, his striking probity. He was overwhelmed. Saigal's pronunciation had notably improved by then. Saigal finished and quietly sat on the floor waiting for the verdict.

After some debate Sarat Chandra found a solution. He explained that these songs were to be sung in a brothel. There was no law that only Bengalis could visit such a house of ill- fame. There could be Biharis or Punjabis or Marwaris or anyone else. If then a non-Bengali would sing Bengali songs in such a place why should anyone object merely because the man was not a certified Bengali? Sarat Chandra thought the Bengali public would love it, particularly because a non-Bengali was singing their songs so well and with so much power and appeal. So it was decided that Saigal would sing the songs and the scene was then shot and 'Devdas' was ready for release.

The Bengali public raved and ran wild, delighted and overjoyed. The film was a hit. Very few people guessed that the singer in the brothel was a Punjabi. All over Bengal, in the adjoining provinces, everywhere, people collected to see it. It appeared all over the country, sometimes in travelling cinemas under canvas tents, in bioscopes and picture palaces in Kanpur, in Allahabad, in Benaras, in Lucknow. Wherever there were Bengalis, the picture thrived and spun money. In distant Bombay it came in morning shows and House Full signs went up. People who had already seen the film several times went back merely for that single scene where a new and unknown Bengali sang songs that were fast becoming part of the heritage of Bengali light music. The songs of 'Devdas' had become a part of Bengal's life.

Two very crucial discoveries were made when Saigal appeared in the 'Devdas' of Promothesh Barua singing Bengali songs that became hits in Bengal. The first was that the man did not look unimpressive. He had a presence on the screen which need not be hidden under false beards, moustache, voluminous turbans and shawls. His bald head, properly fixed with a contemporary wig had intelligently photographed, could make a hero out of him for non-historical dramas.

The second and a more pivotal one was the possibility of Saigal acting in bilingual films for national distribution. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "239".

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 6

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok[38])

dhaivat Sometime around the early part of this century, music began to be taught by a teacher. This method began slowly to be known as tuition. The _gharanas_ of music were at the time the main strongholds of the closed and secret practice of the art. A large number of these so-called teachers belonged to these distinguished _gharanas_ and were the beneficiaries of the authentic wisdom and practice of their art. There is no doubt that many of them were nourished at well-known sources of musical certitude.

It is true that they had afterwards abandoned the continued and exacting practice needed to keep the window open on their art, to keep it quick within them for a lifetime. There were several reasons for what can be called a kind of renegading on their vocations of which many accused such teachers. Apart from the qualitative differences between them as musicians these teachers were driven to tuitions largely because of economic reasons. The slow disintegration of the joint families which began sometime at the end of the last century and which in the past guaranteed their members food and shelter all their lives, made it necessary for these men to seek alternative sources of livelihood. There was very little money in the practice of the musician's art in the world of performance alone and since music was all these men knew they took to teaching it for a fee.

Some at least of these musicians that came from these distinguished _gharanas_ of the time were not merely proficient singers and performers, but transformed men. They had understood and experienced the true meaning of the music they had so arduously acquired in the context of the evolutionary processes of life. They also knew very clearly, in their very natures as it were, then they put out to teach that, while they embodied _gharanas_ closely enough they would themselves never attain to those multiple dimensions, reach the very jetting source of the art as their own _gurus_ had. This they knew very clearly.

So they did not promise their students that there was any possibility in the normal course for them to attain to greatness.

Proficiency, yes; virtuosity, if they worked hard; cleverness and wit, if they had the gift; pleasure and a measure of ecstatic enjoyment, almost certain; but greatness, very remote, almost impossible. Listening to the utterances of the archetypes of these _gharanas_, many aspiring students hoped to achieve the same magnified clarity at one or two removes through such tuitions. This hope arose out of a poor understanding of the true nature of our music.

For example, the students were never ready to believe that this art cannot be communicated entirely through the conventional teaching method, then beginning all over the country in the general educational world. It was possible only through the _guru-shishya_ relationship. Very few people find it possible to understand the difference between the _guru-shishya_ and the teacher-student relationship. They think these are the same things, only different names. They admit the qualitative differences of a sort, religious matters, like ritual joining of the student with his _guru_ by a sanctified thread and also to obedience and service of the _guru_.

Apart from these superficial and decorative gestures, they believed that the _guru-shishya parampara_ to be the same thing as the teacher-student relationship. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Abroad, in other countries, this misunderstanding of the true nature of the _guru-shishya_ relationship has led to

38Source: K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara

much maligning of this unique and creative relationship.

But this largely because Indians themselves do not know anything more about it than the foreign social scientist and both together join in misrepresenting it to each other. This is a crucial aspect of the art of learning and needs to be understood.

Any teacher of music can provide an environment in which a true _guru-shishya_ relationship can exist. But it needs certain irreducible minimum conditions without which the relationship cannot be developed.

It needs firstly a certain single-minded passion for music in the student, so that his teacher might become a _guru_ to him.

This is not merely a love for music or a desire to learn it. It is a fierce, consuming desperate state of mind which is prepared to abandon all to acquire this art. It is a totally timeless approach. That is, there exists nothing between the student and the music he is committed to learn. No considerations extraneous to learning the art. He has no time-frame in which he conceives he must acquire the art, no condition of comfort or convenience or minimum needs, no personal existence apart from this purpose.

It is such a pupil who acquires what the _gharanas_ have produced once or sometimes twice in each generation and sometime none.

The fact that in traditional India the method of teaching prevalent was the _guru-shishya parampara_ did not mean that every student who joined the _gurukul_ automatically acquired a _guru_. The actual product of the _parampara_ which is the unique creative person who stood in symbolic relationship to his time occurred because of an unique relationship of a student with his _guru_. The system was no more responsible for this person than the apple that fell on Newton's head was responsible for the Third Law of Motion.

The _parampara_ was only a convenience, an ideal environment for the acquisition of a _guru_. That was all. It was always the student who sought out a teacher, never the other way around.

The triggering mechanism of this relationship was the student. Never the teacher. To say that the _guru-shishya parampara_ is dying out in India is to say that it is no longer possible for a student to love the art more than his very life any more. It does not imply that there are no teachers who can become _guru_s to students who have the necessary psychological motivation.

Most of the collateral features of such a relationship which are given so much importance in latter day analyses of the _parampara_, such physical service to the _guru_, implicit obedience to him, are small and peripheral symptoms of this passion and not the cause or a substitute for it. Every generation has produced men and women with such passion capable of _guru_ right up to the present time. Few, certainly, and they have always been few, but enough to put the wonder and the mystery back into the simple art that is taught in schools as Indian music.

Unfortunately, this relationship cannot be observed from the outside, for it cannot be understood apart from the art itself. For the greater part of this relationship lies outside time and space. The specifics of _raga_ and _tala_ or compositions can be acquired easily and by the simplest instruction. The real thing which such a student acquires from his _guru_ occurs through a subtle osmosis, a non-material transmission which is formless and without parts. There is more than knowledge which passes between them. And this does not take the form of a teaching but manifests itself as a change of being. This capacity to transform one's being arises out of the interaction between the _guru_ and the _shishya_ and is a kind of rebirth. The student extracts this out of his _guru_ with the strength of his own passion.

Saigal was one of these all-or-nothing types. There is no doubt that he tried to appear like most other people, but he was deeply aware of a basic difference between his own inner nature and the aims and purposes of the world into which he was born.

We know that Saigal born into a highly sensitive musical family [Unsupported assertion.]. His mother was apparently the source of this gift. But the young Kundan Lal, his mother discovered, was not merely musical as she was. He had a whole temperament that went along with his intense love for music. His total disinterestedness towards his studies, his lack of ambition, his dreamy entranced state of mind, all these were grievous disappointment to his father, who was after all a very successful Tehsildar of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, somewhat imperious and not excessively tolerant towards failures and ineptitudes.

Kundan never passed his examinations. He was hardly interested in the first thing in his education. He was unable to remember a hurt, was generous and compassionate, totally without rancour or pride caring little for the value of money, indifferent towards possessions, he was in fact a giant-sized failure. The father grieved over his son.

They often clashed. The son, timorous and bewildered by the fury of the old man, found an ally in his mother who was understanding, perpetually loving, shielding him from the horrors of a beating, hiding him away from his father's helpless fury.

Before Saigal's voice broke into the tenor baritone of his mature years, it likely that he had a high soprano. Describing this period of his life to the astrologer Badri Prasad, Saigal dwelt at some length on his earliest experience as an actor. He was only about ten when he began acting as Sita in the Ram Lila celebrations in Jammu where he was raised. He recalled that he used to scream so shrilly when he was being kidnapped by the villainous Sunil Raina, who was the Ravana every year, that he was sometimes in danger of being dropped on the ground by the fleeing demon of Lanka. This was a singing role, this Sita of the young Saigal, and he loved it and waited expectantly the whole year for the witching month of October to come round again, so that he might sing as the wronged and virtuous Sita.

His father's attitude towards these activities of his son at least at that time seems to have been neutral. He was still in service as a Tehsildar, a position in those days of some authority and official importance. He knew that his son was fond os singing and seemed to have a gift for it and people liked to hear him. The Ram Lila celebrations in his area were the most popular in Jammu largely because of its singing heroine. In other parts of the town the Ram Lila had dumb clucks for their heroines. Sita with heavily made up faces who, if they tried to sing at all, raised cracked high-pitched yelps to the heavens so that when in the final act the earth mercifully swallowed their heroines there was a sigh of relief all around.

But the Saigal Sita was different. There was a pain and a hurt in the Ram Lila in which the Tehsildar's son played the role of Sita. Not the sentimental wringing of hands nor the wild, stagy gesticulations of the abandoned queen of Ayodhya. This was different. The delicious _bageshri_ which began "sumana varashi sat sura bhaley," the _malkaus_ beginning "shyam gatha rajeeva vilochana," the _sindhura_ which began "anuja janaki shith niranthara," or the _kafi_ which began "din neekey bitey jaathey hain," or the concluding _bhairavi_, "raghupati pratham prem anumana."

These songs were much more than the cheap tinsel of the costumes of the King of Ayodhya or his queen, nor indeed the glass beads on the necklace of Mandodari, or the shoddy painted backdrops in front of which the grim drama ran its course. The songs made the night come alive with the power and the passion of that fated couple and the enormous canvas of their lives.

Saigal's father attended these celebrations. He usually sat in the front row-tall, turbaned, and erect. He took

all these activities of his son in the Ram Lila as a diversion from which his son would soon be free.

But what he was not prepared to bear as the years passed, he retired and moved to Jullundur, was that he did not see eye to eye with a single thing about his son. Even his appearance was always unkempt. The boy dressed himself well enough now and then. Yes, he knew exactly how to look smart and chipper if he put his mind to it and certainly was sensitive to the details of a good toilet. But it was the total lack of a bit of personal vanity which hurt the old man. He never asked for clothes or new things for himself as his other sons did. They were normal, Kundan was not. His father felt that the boy was thwarting him vengefully.

As the boy grew, the father was filled with foreboding. As his son sang all about the house the whole day long that voice sent a quiver of disquiet through him. No pleasure. Only a fear for this son's future. In his own way he tried to change his son's ways. Often he advised him, sometimes beating him mercilessly, he even tried the stratagem of humiliating him before his brothers. Every plot that could think of was tried. His mother suffered intensely in this relationship between her son and his father. She often intervened between them to stop the fury of the man against his wayward son. For example, Kundan was forced by his father to cook all the meals and wait upon his brothers as though he were a servant in his own house. All these punishments the boy took with singular fortitude as long as he was able to sing at least secretly without letting his father know.

In Jammu, in those days there lived a _pir_ in the name of Salman Yousuf. This man, it was said, was a direct descendant of Serajuddin the Sufi and himself probably belonged to the Yesevi sect. Young Kundan had been blessed by this _pir_ soon after he was born. Seeing that the boy's strange negligence of his studies was causing his father much distress, she her son, then perhaps 11 years old, to this _pir_ for guidance and blessing. Salman Yousuf told her not to worry about her son's education and predicted for him a great future of fame and universal adulation.

Then he blessed the boy and ritually bestowed upon him a _zikr_ and a _riaz_ which the boy was likewise made to accept ritually.

The _pir_ also told the anxious mother to send the boy to him if he fell into any trouble.

In describing these events to him, the astrologer Badri Prasad said, Saigal's eyes would often fill with tears and his shoulders would shake with emotion. The _zikr_ and the _riaz_ taught to him by the _pir_ was a part of the secret discipline directed towards the attainment within the notes of the scales those inaudible emotional responses which conventional musical training completely omits to develop. This discipline is practised widely by the Yesevi order of Sufis not for the purpose of becoming performing musicians, but as a method of acquiring spiritual enlightenment. Jammu and Kashmir used to be along with some other parts of India, a centre of Sufi practices and Dervish orders, probably second only to the Central Asian Highlands where the older orders of Sufis and Dervish schools still flourish.

In Jammu in those days many Sufi saints and Khojas and _pirs_ lived inconspicuous lives practising their disciplines, disguised as beggars, artisans, as workers in copper and brass and weavers of carpets and silks. Salman Yousuf was, at the time Saigal was brought to him, already an old man with a white and shining beard and two piercing eyes that would make any man melt before their penetrating gaze. Off and on and not very regularly, Saigal practised the _zikr_ and the _riaz_ in the years following. as often as not on his mother's prompting.

In was when he was about 13 years old that his voice began to show the first signs of breaking. It was then the lad panicked. In those days the good voice was supposed to be a soprano, if you were a woman and if you were a man, a contralto was supposed to be the ideal voice. A tenor could also sing if he had a smooth whipped cream texture of voice and moved through an ambiguous register with a timbre that was like a tenor

below and an alto timbre in the upper reaches. Try to recall the voices of Abdul Karim Khan or Onkar Nath Thakur, Vinayak Rao Patwardhan, Narayan Rao Vyas-all voices, which although they gad gone through the break of adolescence, the process had made very little difference to the voices of their childhood. Saigal's high soprano suddenly disappeared.

In grew rough and squeaked embarrassingly. Its roughness baffled the lad. Its range fell by more than four notes in the upper register and went down by nearly six notes below his older octave. A voice which the lad could bend and turn with great ease and flexibility was now as contrary and difficult as it could be. As he tried to sing the well-known favourites of his childhood, the young Kundan discovered with a shock that he could no longer sing. To him it seemed that he was under a sentence of death.

Thee was an unaccustomed silence in the house. His father wondered. His mother wondered. The boy every night wept into his pillow to sleep. Softly to himself he would croon to find out whether as the weeks passed there was any change in his voice. But there was not. His friends told him that this was normal. After all he was a boy and boys were not meant to sing.

His mother sensed this fear in this brooding silent son of hers. When a singing voice is silenced the silence that ensues is deafening in the extreme. Even his father wished some time that the boy would sing, if only to cheer up the house. Together, mother and son tried several nostrums. First they thought that it was only a cold. The doctor prescribed Kalzana.

Then it was the turn of homeopathy. Ferrum Phos, Kali Mur came and went. Then the _vaid_ took over where the homeopath had left off. Turmeric and jaggery, three almonds ground to a paste eaten on an empty stomach; garlic and ginger; fomentation on the neck with _neem_ leaves in hot water; Ganges mud-poultice and poultices of paper boiled in milk and mustard oil massage- everything from folk medicine to contemporary practices were tried. The growl and the rumble remained.

Confused and frightened, Kundan went to school listlessly and listlessly returned home, sat and brooded secretly. Often he would try out his voice forcing it to pitches it was no longer able to reach and found that his voice cracked and felt sore at the end of his effort.

Finally, one day he went to his mother and asked her whether he should not go to the _pir_ Salman Yousuf, and ask for his help. After all, the old man had told her to visit him if he was in any trouble. This thing, Kundan told his mother, that had happened to him was the greatest trouble he had ever had. His mother did not quite see it the same way. She was concerned about her son's voice, yes. She was herself a singer of some depth and quality although she had never been trained and her repertoire consisted largely of old-world ditties and folk songs of the Punjab. She loved to have Kundan accompany her. When she sang with him something woke in her own singing. And they had often sung together out of earshot of her husband.

Kundan's father often scolded her for guiding his son in the loose ways of a singer, inept, feckless and shamelessly generous.

She would have been somewhat relieved if the boy would begin to study with a will and pass his School Leaving Certificate examinations and perhaps go into one of those professions which people in her world would understand. She had once dreamed that her son would join the railways and then she could travel with him for little or no expense at all to the pilgrim towns of India, to Benaras, to Gaya and Prayag, and to the temple of the South famed in legend and song.

So when the boy came to her with this tragedy of his breaking voice, she did not entirely agree with him that this kind of trouble was what the _pir_ had offered to help him with.

It was more than a year later that the mother and the son undertook the journey, to the _pir_. By that time the World War I had ended and young Kundan's father's retirement from his service with the government as a Tehsildar was only a year a little in the future.

The _pir_ welcomed them and said he had been expecting them.

Young Kundan described what had happened to him with tears in his eyes, said that it would be the end of his life if he could not sing. He had no voice any more. He reminded the _pir_ of his promise to help him when he was in trouble. Now trouble had come to him as large as life itself. He had no hope, no plans; his future was black, his present was little better than death. With these words the slender boy fell full length at his feet upon the floor sobbing, and repeatedly struck his forehead upon the old man's feet.

The _pir_ gently pulled his feet away and lifted him up and seated him by his side, wiped his eyes and then cradled his head upon his shoulders and slowly swung him back and forth as though he were a child being comforted until his sobs died down and his shoulders stopped heaving. Then quietly in the dim light of the evening the _pir_ began speaking, "Do not fret my son. This break in your voice could be the luckiest thing in your life. It gives you a chance to be present while you are being reborn. Life should be a succession of rebirths. It is not enough to be born once. I agree you sang well before, but the voice with which you sang was not yours. It was given to you. You found it. You had not made it yourself. Now you have to redeem your voice, the voice that was pledged to you. You have therefore to make it from scratch. You must know every little bit of it, hour by hour of your life, as you begin to make your new voice. Do not sing songs for two years. Stop all songs. Practise the _zikr_ and the _riaz_ I have given you all the time. Waking and sleeping, keep your mind upon it, and keep your voice aimed at it. Do this silently and softly. Let no one hear. If at some later stage you want to practise it on your singing pitch, go out into some lonely place where no one will hear you."

He then cautioned at said, "Now remember this is a secret practice. Like the darkness that a seed needs to sprout, this _zikr_ and this _riaz_ needs a secret place in which to sprout. As you grow in this practice you will have made the _swaras_ of your music all by yourself and since these are your own _swaras_, the songs you will sing with them will also be yours, your own songs, no matter whose they might have been, before you sang them. Speech and song will become one for you. You will be able to sing anything and remember anything. This _zikr_ and this _riaz_ can move mountains. The impossible will become possible.

But you must not stop this practice anytime in your life. This _riaz_ and the _zikr_ is life itself and if you practise, it will become your life far more truly than your life is your own now. I can tell you nothing more. If with this boat you cannot cross the river of your life I cannot help you. Now get up, dry your eyes and make a resolve in your conscience that for two years from now you will not sing but practice what I have given you. Go in Peace." With these words the old man arose from his seat and was gone, withdrawing abruptly into an inner room. Mother and son left together. The stars had risen on a fragrant summer night.

The boy that returned from this meeting with the _pir_ was not the same that had timidly entered the presence of Salman Yousuf. Something had suddenly awakened in the boy from the touch and the feel of the old man. Something new, unaccustomed and strange. Describing this experience to the astrologer Badri Prasad, Saigal repeatedly returned to two things. First was his slowly burning conviction that everyone, including himself, had too little time in life to achieve anything permanent. In fact even a long life was not of much use. Fortuitous things, incidental things, like money or success, or power, these things did not seem relevant in the context of this meeting he had just had with the _pir_.

The second was the realisation, as time went on, that if he was to live at all he must have a path to travel. And following this path had nothing to do with what people call getting along.

This path was one thing and getting along was another. They were not mutually exclusive but neither were they directly related. He realised intuitively at that time that this path was life itself, his very reason to be, and this other thing, the succeeding, this passing of examinations, making money or getting along, whatever people liked to call it, these things were only a means whereby it may be possible to live so that he may strive in the path. Mere money and success were like the fire in a kitchen. No use unless you had something to cook on the fire. Salman Yousuf had given him something to cook. He had to prepare the materials given to him so that he at some stage may light the fire to cook it on. There was time enough for the fire. First he must assemble the ingredients so that some day he may feast.

During the journey home, the boy sat silent, withdrawn. His hands in his mother's, not saying a word as the cart creaked homewards. He resolved in the double darkness of the trees above him and the night beyond that he would grow up at once and begin the _riaz_ without wasting any more time.

Over the next two years and more the young Saigal sang no songs. Indeed, he forgot the words of the many songs he knew so well. Kanan Devi describes in her strange and moving book how Saigal was always tuning his _swara_, sitting or standing.

He took Salman Yousuf's injunction to him literally in his life. Slowly, bit by bit a new man emerged from the cocoon in which lay covered in the past. There were many who noticed this change with a certain bewilderment over the next several years. But few knew what it was.

In his later years Saigal often used to say to his friend Ali Bokhari, who used to work in those years in the All India Radio, "I was born at the age of about 12, in a _pir_'s hut one windy evening in Jammu." This statement was in a certain sense only the literal truth if you understood the particular meaning of the word "birth" in which Saigal used it, although it is true very few people recognised what that curious episode in Saigal's boyhood really meant.

The touch of that profound and transforming moment with the Sheikh Salman Yousuf and the two years of musical silence that followed made the man. The Sheikh had not merely blessed him in a ritual sense, but what had happened to him later as a result of the unremitting practice of the _zikr_ and _riaz_ the _pir_ had instructed him to perform, was no miracle. It was merely the consequence of a certain kind of effort. But it was in those two years of his life that he worked hardest at it, that he realised what the _pir_ had actually done to him and where this work was leading him to.

All the uncertainties and the fears of his future disappeared. In the place of distrust and insecurity there was this strange certitude. And because of this growing sense of meaning in his life, success, when it came, never went to his head. He knew how it had all happened.

The three years following his meeting with the Sheikh brought many changes into his family. His father retired from the service of the Jammu and Kashmir Government. The family migrated to Jullundur and settled very near the Panj Pir gate in an area which is now known as the Saigal mohalla. The shift from Nawashehr in Jammu to Jullundur was the ending of a major chapter and the opening of a new one in the history of the Saigal family.

His father Amar Chand Saigal became a contractor and made some money.

While these wholesale uprootings were taking place, in the metaphorical language of a song which he was to compose many years later for his wife, Saigal began to learn the first steps by which a man may learn to close his outer eyes and learn to open his inner ones.

A large number of the psychophysical exercises that apply to traditional disciplines whether these are directed towards a craft such as carpet weaving or pharmacology or an art such as music or sculpture, alter and transform the student inwardly.

Unlike the modern technique of learning, which can be called the Organized Method, the traditional method was essential, that is, it was at once holistic and instantaneous. In this kind of learning, the carpet weaver did learn eventually to weave, but he came to the art as a consequence of experiencing the nature of wool and it was through this understanding that he wove. The sculptor likewise _knew_ clay with which he moulded figures, and the singer realized _swara_ experiencing the stuff of these arts and crafts in a subliminal act of comprehension. The skills were never learnt in isolation but occurred as a burgeoning recognition of the rhapsodic essence of life itself.

Many varied layers of the student's inner being get articulated and restored to conscious life by this method of learning and by the sustained practice of these exercises the inner essence of the artist became accessible to his art. It would seem from all available evidence that Saigal practised the _zikr_ and the _riaz_ most of his life. There are many who bear witness to the fact that Saigal was always working on his notes.

Everyone thought he was crooning, as a singer may be expected to do. This was a misunderstanding. He rarely sang walking around even softly to himself. He sang only when he sat down to sing with his harmonium. Since this work he was doing had nothing to do with music in the sense of songs and performance, no one recognized it for what it really was.

Unlike _Mian_ Tansen, who had in all likelihood received the same thing from _Mian_ Mohammad Ghaus that Saigal got from the Sheikh Salman Yousuf, he did not get a Swami Haridas later to nurture and sustain him, to provide him with the incalculable ambience of a _parampara_. This, for a man of Saigal's destiny and talent, was indeed a grievous shortcoming.

But we must remember that Saigal was born into the trivial 20th century of plastics and vinyls, into an universe of substitutes and surrogates for everything that was genuine and deathless in his tradition. Yet how frantically he had struggled with the limitation of his own historical time so that when we see the movie 'Tansen' today, despite its distortions of history and its too sentimental concoctions, it was Saigal's spark of uniqueness that gave the film such credibility as it had. There was a good bit of mystery and wonder in the singing Saigal of 'Tansen'. Doubtless the original Tansen who sang in the court of the emperor had this same mystery and this wonder a million-fold more. But the people who flocked to see the film knew this, were convinced that it was the same stuff, the same order of strangeness, admittedly attenuated in degree but of the same fire and so were able to go home after the movie bemused and impassioned.

So that morning, in the early 1930s, the young man who stood before R. C. Boral had already in a certain sense become a finished product in a musical sense. He had by then put in nearly 12 years of apprenticeship on his preceptor's instructions. Secretly, unknown to all, a radiant butterfly had emerged from the spiky caterpillar he once used to be.

The trouble with human transformation is that it is rarely a dramatic occurrence. They are slow, imperceptible processes whose yeast-like workings lie concealed in the dark being of the human person. In our daily lives we rarely, if ever, meet a truly transformed person or indeed one on the road to such transformations. We have no ready means by which we may recognise such a person. We have to depend upon physical changes or changes of habits like eating or drinking or manner or something visual, and call that transformation.

But the person on the path of transformation does not exhibit any noticeable external change, nothing

that is visible as change. It is the flavour of the man that changes. It is an internal thing and at least in its earlier stages does not exhibit an one-to-one relationship with outer life. None of his kinsmen recognised the subtle change of emphasis in the boy. How, for instance, he had almost imperceptibly stopped to sing, had ceased to daydream, was full of laughter and unaccustomed fun, never any longer seemed to get hurt or turn sullen, never wallowed in self-pity.

Everybody thought that the lad was becoming good. They did not know that young Kundan was becoming neither worse nor better.

He had merely embarked upon his life's journey. He had therefore very little time at his disposal for the usual preoccupations of those who had no journey to undertake. The superficial difference of manners and behaviour which people noticed were the resonance of a basic retuning of the chords of his life, mere symptoms of a larger and a more total realignment.

Ali Bokhari in whom Saigal confided several events of his life used to say that Saigal never ran away from home as is commonly supposed. At that point of his life he did not need to run away from anything in the usual connotation of the phrase. Bokhari believed that Saigal had merely left home, left in order to do what he believed was his main task in life. It was a kind os work, he believed, no non in his world a that time would understand. In order to do this work he needed a minimal livelihood. His family's ambitions, he knew, would be out of focus with his own. If he lived at home this work he was sure would not be done without having to make lengthy defences about his purposes and his life's aims.

So he left home without telling his family; where to find him? But all the years he was away, he wrote to his mother to tell her that he was well. But he never revealed his address and in some cases not even the town where he lived. He often got his letters posted from neighbouring towns. There were rumours that he was in Bareily, some people said that he was in Kanpur, in Lucknow, in Simla. Some of his kinsmen went to look for him. They brought back tales that he had joined a travelling troupe of actors and had gone to Bombay. There were also rumours that he had gone to Bihar and some said that he had joined the mines.

On one occasion he had told Ali Bokhari that he had left home in order to prepare himself morally for his life, and if indeed the Sheikh had blessed him, this blessing consisted only in providing him with the facilities to do his appointed work. This came about fortuitously. No one directly helped him. On the other hand, everything stood apart to let him do what he wished to do. Within a year of his meeting with the Sheikh, he said, nothing could stop him from the practice of the work he had been required to do. All this other concerns, his family, his friends, even the urge to enjoy the listening and the practice of music, even these became secondary and finally disappeared. All he thought night and day, waking and sleeping was his _riaz_ and the accompanying _zikr_.

Jamini Roy, the painter, who knew Saigal from his earliest days in New Theatres, once said, "He was such a pure character, so simple, that it is hard to describe him in simple words. He was like somebody who had stepped out of an icon, so unaffected, totally oblivious of himself, like a line drawing." ----------

RMIM Archive Article "240".

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 7

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok[39])

nishad Sometime in the last few years of the 30s, there used to be published from Calcutta a monthly by the name of 'Jayathi.' The second number of this magazine came out about the time when the Bengali version of 'Street Singer,' which was called 'Saathi,' began running at the Chitra, for this issue contained an extensive review of the film. It is doubtful that this magazine was read by many people, for as far as is known it used to sell mainly in the College Street area and also in Bhowanipore, mostly by hand. There used to be a derelict bookshop in the neighborhood of the Purna Theatre that occasionally stocked a few copies. Jayathi's readership had some out-of-town subscribers in Lucknow, Allahabad, and Benaras. It is doubtful that the magazine survived the war for there is a strong note of uncertainty and farewell in its editorial of March 1941.

Some copies of 'Jayathi' of those years are still extant in the collection of ephemera of the language department of Chicago University. The editor of 'Jayathi' was a product of Shantiniketan and his name was Kirit Ghosh. He was apparently a keen and critical student of the arts and music, and the cinema, for 'Jayathi' was notable for having published in its short span of life two interviews with K. L. Saigal and one with Pahari Sanyal. There was hardly any film journalism to speak of in those years, yet Jayathi's effort was both informative and exact.

The interviews with Saigal had well-conceived questions, cogently put, and without trace of the customary verbosity of those interviewers who never let the subject they are interviewing speak quietly and at length without interrupting them with ideas of their own.

To one of Kirit Ghosh's questions, Saigal answered, "I am not a singer, not really. I can only be called a phraser. I have had no true musical training except what I have heard and remembered. I know very little of the real thing. I do not think of a song in terms of its notes, at least not exclusively.

This is not even true when I am learning it or playing it on the harmonium when I sing it. I think of the meaning of the words and wrap the tune around the words. I have no clear understanding of the grammar of music. I manage to sing because of a strong feeling about how certain sounds should feel in a given _raga_. I have a certain feeling how the _dhaivat_ should feel in _malkaus_, and the _madhyama_ and also the nature of the _nishad_, in its relationship with the _shadj_. This changes from _raga_ to _raga_. I do not know whether this feeling is right to have for I have never been taught _malkauns_ by a musician. It is the same with _asavari_ which has a curious _madhyama_ or the magical relationship between the _gandhar_ and the _dhaivat_ in _bhairavi_ and the strange feeling of bringing in an occasional _teevra madhyama_ into it.

To another question he answered, "My favourite _raga_ is _bhairavi_. To know _bhairavi_ is to know all the _ragas_. You know how it is. There is _todi_ in it, there is _kafi_ in it, and _bhimpalasi_ and _asavari_ and the flavour and scent of so many _ragas_. In fact, with any three notes of _bhairavi_ you can have a _dhun_ and the possibility of another song. If I had _bhairavi_ I will not pine for any other _raga_ very much."

At another point of the interview Saigal expressed, "People who learn to sing with the help of their ears alone cannot explain how they do it. All I can say about my own singing is that I do not use ten notes if I can manage to do the same with one. I have to make one note, and do the work which a trained singer does with

39Source: K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara

ten. This is because I know very little."

It might be recalled that Saigal spoke Bengali fluently. He could use its sounds with great perception and economy. There is an apocryphal story of the time when 'Jiban Maran' was being shot, how in a certain scene Saigal pronounces 'gelash' as 'gilash'. 'gelash' is the Bengali sound of the Hindi 'gilas'. In English, of course, it stands for the well-known 'glass'. We are told, the director of the film let the wrong pronunciation remain in the film daring the audience to find it. There is no evidence that anyone who saw the film noticed the lapse. He sang every kind of song that he could, in Bengali. Many of them were taught to him by his dear friend and mentor Pankaj Mullick. He as good in _Rabindra Sangeet_ as in _adhunik_, as good in the _kirtan_ as the _baul_. He exhibited the same idiomatic self- confidence in Bengali as he had in Urdu, Persian, and Hindi songs.

Saigal was able to invest the lyrical structure of the song a curious and self-evident sovereignty. On another occasion when he was asked how, without having ever learnt any music, he was able to give his music such a superb polish and elegance, he replied that he could not explain, as he rarely listened to what he was singing. "I hear very little when I sing except the meaning of the song, as I feel it and the way it moves about."

It may be the proper place here to observe that the traditional _gharanas_ of our music rarely taught the notes of the scale nor of the _raga_. They learned the _swara_ but not the scale. Even in instrumental music this was not done. _aroha_ and _avaroha_ and the notes were the stock in trade of school-men. The _ragas_ were always taught by ear, always remembered by their characteristic progressions and _bhavas_ and the feel of their passage rather than by the knowledge of the notes. Notes were always taught long after the _raga_ was part of the ear and the feeling of the student. It is not difficult to realise that much more than the intellect and understanding was involved in this kind of learning.

The emotional responses towards _ragas_ were finely tuned, made reliable by constant practice and reflection and the student was made to develop in it the enjoyment of a child at play, a dreamlike ecstasy, that was half of this world and half of another substance, which belonged to somewhere else.

Saigal belonged to this category of singers although never trained under any of the _gharanas_. All his life he mourned the fact that he did not study under an _ustad_ and as a result felt incomplete. There was, however, a short episode when he attempted to study under Faiyaz Khan, the _Aftab-e-Mousiqui_ of Indian music. After hearing him sing a short _khayal_ in _raga darbari_ which Saigal had specially learnt for the occasion, the story goes, the Khan Saheb told him, "My dear boy, there is nothing that I can teach you now that will make you a greater singer. You are ready to serve." It is said that the two became dear friends. The Khan Saheb did not get around to teach his famous student any music. Saigal remained as untouched as virgin as before.

Ali Bokhari says of Saigal's art, that he was somewhat like those miraculously gifted cooks we hear about, who when asked to describe a recipe explain it as a "pinch of this, a little of that." They are rarely able to tell anyone how it is actually done. They remember their repertoire through a highly sensitive and finely tuned memory of tastes and flavours and aromas, towards which their other senses and skills direct them unerringly. Saigal himself was a very good cook and knew the delicate art of the blind of spice and time that made a mysteriously flavoured and succulent dish that not merely tasted good but nourished the mind and spirit equally.

It will be interesting at this point to examine how the famous golden voice actually sang those unforgettable melodies which have become imperceptibly a part of our heritage. It is often said that Saigal had a voice that was somewhat nasal. This is not an accurate description. Saigal's voice had a predominant nasal

resonance. A good example of a truly nasal voice of that time was the voice of Sachin Dev Burman. Saigal used his sinuses and the bones of his head to resonate his notes. That was all. He had a peculiar register. It was not easy to locate. He could touch a low E and I have heard him touch a low D, which is brass territory in opera. Yet his voice never sounded like K. C. Dey.

He sang the famous _thumri_, "babula mora," in the film 'Street Singer' on the third white note of the harmonium. The pitch of the record is lower, closer to the first white note.

This pitch is extraordinarily high even for a certified male tenor in Indian music. Kumar Gandharva sings approximately at this pitch. Yet this same voice is capable of singing at a low fifth black note of the harmonium with female leads like Kanan Devi or Uma Shashi.

Usually voices that can easily move around in the neighbourhood of the third white of the harmonium are barely audible in the H.G. black note. But when you listen to the timbre of his voice when he sings "babula mora" in the film it barely seems beyond the customary first white note of the harmonium in which Saigal very often sang. The smooth seamless rendering of the song is more remarkable when we think of the pitch in which he sang it, and the fact that right through the filming of the sequences of the shot, Saigal was walking at a normal speed of any street singer with a harmonium slung over his shoulders.

When he sang on the first white note of the harmonium in which many of this songs are sung he has a timbre that seems baritone almost keeling over into basso. Think of the third verse of the song "kisne yeh sab khel rachaya" or the third verse of the Bengali song "nayiba ghumale priyo" or the lowest note of "bina pankh panchhi" from the film 'Tansen'. A very low note for a voice that is also able to negotiate on the third white note of the harmonium, a slowly measured _bhairavi_ with neither strain nor break in register.

Saigal could produce remarkable tonal differences in his voice which seemed able to change from song to song. Although its characteristic timbre remained unaltered, its tonal essence adapted itself to verse and song with an eerie facility. Consider the tonal quality of that unforgettable Ghalib _ghazal_, "nukta chi hai" and put it against "radhey rani dey dalo na." Take "din nikey beetey jaate hain" and put it against the _bairavi_, "main baithee thee phulvari" and hear it against "main unhe chhedun" of Ghalib.

Think of "soja rajkumari." You can call it crooning if you like. Only, it is not. It is sung as fully and as completely as the opening lines of "diya jalao." It is sung at a low volume and not at a low pitch. The pitch is not the speaking pitch of crooning but the volume is. It is somewhat like the wick in a wick lamp. The wick of the song has been lowered and so the volume like the brightness of the light is lowered. The fire within the holder of the wick inside the aperture is burning exactly as it would, if raised.

Saigal epitomised more than any other singer in the field of light music the analogy of a voice to a violin or a _sarangi_ or any of the bowed instruments of the viol family. The breath on the vocal chords acts exactly like the bow of a violin on the strings. Saigal lowered the volume of his voice not by constricting the throat but by lightening the breath upon his vocal chords, just as a violinist would lighten the pressure of the bow of his violin upon its strings. Instead of the fingers on the finger board of the violin, the throat is capable of making its muscles carry minute muscular tensions that are capable of producing those hardly audible macrotonal differences in the quality of the note, an example of which is the _komal gandhar_ in the line "itni to samjha le" in the song "karun kya aas nirash" from the film 'Dushman'.

Saigal was able to make the astonishing differences of tone and texture of his notes merely by altering the weight of his breath upon his vocal chords. There are hundreds of examples of this technique in his songs. Indeed in any one of them, taken at random, an example of this technique can be found. We can however take the most widely known and among the more popular songs "soja rajkumari" and observe the texture of

the voice rendering the word "soja" in the last repetition of the refrain.

Observe the gentle huskiness that descends upon the word like a mist and the breath lifting even lighter upon this word than upon the rest of the song.

It might be good to recall the descending terminal cadences of the song "piya bin nahi avat chain." It is not on any record.

It will be necessary to look out for a re-run of the film 'Devdas.' The master craftsman who first sang this song and made it a household name and who had never in his life until then seen a film was told of this song and saw 'Devdas' and wept like a child.

He demanded to meet Saigal, and called on him and heard the song again. Observe the smooth legato line of the text arcing across the octave and the soft hardly audible slow trill on the lower tonic sustaining the word "chain". The breath is as soft as the breath of a sleeping child. [Help! Who is the master craftsman the author is referring to here?]

Saigal had a way of caressing a word. It was such a close and unselfconscious act that it is difficult to remember the voice without the word accompanying it. It is in short difficult to forget the words that voice brought to life whenever an attempt is made to remember the voice by itself. Things like "soja meethe sapane aye" or "raath katey gin gin ke taarey" or "jaba na kisi ne rah sujhayi". Then it is "chandan ka jangala" or the words "chanchala balaka" or "naina lal kapola pe" or the sky-aspiring "main bulata hun", the examples are legion of words brought to vivid life and living autonomously by a quickening of their own.

Those ornaments and graces are another example. Natural and somehow growing so inevitably from the tension of the phrase, the _raga_ and the context. t was difficult to feel their presence in any song as an ornament. Strictly speaking, they were not ornaments at all, they were organic. So they remained almost inaudible.

Then there is another aspect which must be noted. Most singers have a point on the scale that is known as the "passage" when the singer shifts from a chest sound to a head sound. For a range of an incredible three octaves and a fourth, Saigal shows no evidence of such a passage. Most singers "cover" when they approach this critical note, tending to depress their larynx and open their throats wider and concentrate the notes in their heads.

Most singers learn to cover this transition by skillfully shifting from a chest voice to a head voice which preserves in the upper register the natural timbre of their middle register. But even if this is done very skillfully some traces of this passage always remain. It is difficult to detect this transition in the songs of Saigal. He never seems to cover, which for the amplitude of his range was really remarkable.

One likely reason for this extraordinary seamlessness of his style was probably the most significant characteristic of his voice which whenever it touched the scales, whether down in the basement in an E or an F, or high on the _shudh gandhar_ of the _tar saptak_ of a pitch beginning on the third white note of the harmonium was the fact that the voice was throughout a fine mixture of chest and head voice, say fifty-fifty of each. Everywhere, therefore, his timbre remained the same. He was never strident even at very high pitches by measure. The feel of his notes always seemed serene and comfortable.

Another important feature of his singing was his meticulously controlled forward enunciation. We must remember that Saigal's singing technique belonged to the pre-amplification era. He touched the Indian cinema when the talkies were just coming in.

Remember he was only about 26 years old when he was put on a contract with the New Theatres at the time he starred in its first talkie venture. It was a film called 'Mohabbat Ke Ansoo,' an Islamic tale, in which he starred with one Akhtari. He had by then changed his name to Saigal Kashmiri, so that his relatives may not track him down. It was the same in the next two films, 'Subah Ke Sitare' and 'Zinda Laash.' At that time no one knew how to make a special voice for the microphone. We are familiar today of a species of voice known as the microhpone towards which both classical and light musicians tend to train. This is a voice which is hardly audible without a microphone. To hear them without amplification you will be compelled to sit on their laps.

The most intimate-sounding of Saigal's voice did not come from what is today known as the mike voice, a voice is practically manufactured by the sound engineers.

Saigal sang and the microphone eavesdropped. That was all. That is why his most softly sounding songs never feel slack and somnolent. There is a tension in the way the notes climb to the top _shadj_, of "soja rajkumari" or in "ah ko chahiya" or in "jokhon robona" or "bandhinu michhey ghar" from 'Desher Mati.' All very softly sung pieces but bold and tightly traversing the notes of the scale. It was largely a matter of the vocal focus of each note-the centering of the note. In stringed instruments like the _sitar_ this tightness of traverse is achieved by pulling the string from a low note to a higher note without plucking the string to produce portamento, until the tension reaches the intended terminal point of the scale. At that point while the note itself is steady there is an urgency in its tone which is absent if the terminal note is actually held on site by the finger.

This was the vocal technique Saigal habitually employed. It gave his top _shadj_ or higher notes that calling, ringing tone which in Sanskrit is called _ahwan_ and gave his statements a passionate appeal. This is also what made him a troubadour, rather than a singer in the strict indoor sense of the word. Recall the _antara_ of the piece in _kafi_ beginning "jin jaori gori." The top _shadj_, which in that song is an elaboration strictly in the classical mould, swings slightly in the middle as though wafted in a light wind. There is a half sung song in 'Jiban Maran', a little shirt tail of a _kirtan_ beginning "kanchana barani", that begins with the assurance of a full- fledged concert, only to finish half way. Three lines and a little after it begins, the story gets in the way and the song is left unsung. For the size of the rendering the unresolved tension which that song leaves behind among the audience is altogether disproportionate to the song's essential structural value. But the unfinished frustration is made possible because of the powerful musical tension of the opening lines and its meticulous development utilising not a single slack note but every note in a metaphorical sense pulled from somewhere lower down the scale.

Another aspect of Saigal's technique was the strange magic of communicative understatement in which he was a master. When in his interview with Kirit Ghosh he states, "I never use ten notes if one will do," he is stating a simple fact. His variations of a line with its standard rendering would very often have fewer notes in elaboration than its first singing. This regressive technique has a striking impact upon the development of a musical theme.

It focusses the theme at one point of the line of text never letting the attention wander. Invariably in the second variation of a line he brings the tone of his note to a sharp focus gradually like a lens concentrating the sunlight.

Narrower and narrower becomes the focus until the sound seems to spill out of the sides as it were. The Ghalib _ghazal_ "phir mujhe didaye tar" is a good example both of intense focus of the voice to a pin-point centre of each note and of the variations rarely going beyond the main nucleus of the notes that compose it.

This method of elaboration is part of Saigal's remarkable talent for significant understatement and gave his songs that curious piquancy which very few in Indian light music have been able to equal.

The reason why he was able to make this technique work so well for himself was because of his gift of what in Western music is called _tempo rubato_. This is the technique of stealing time from one syllable of a word and restoring it to another. Very often when applied without subtlety this technique tends to mutilate the word and make a hash of meaning. And this often happens in classical music.

There is no law that classical music to become classical must shear meaning off the words of which it is composed. But the easy way out has always been to put the _raga_ before the meaning of the _cheez_. This happens because the singer is unable to do this right and therefore make a virtue out of necessity.

There are very few who can use _rubato_ skillfully. They tend to divide the syllables of words into wholes or large fractions of _matras_ or beats. Saigal was able to steal time without breaking a word mid-section and mutilating its meaning. The _rubato_ he employed was so delicately achieved that no one was aware when he varied a line, the second time around, that he had stolen time off every syllable in different proportion. But the proportions themselves were so minute, such small fractions of whole _matras_ that the listeners, while aware of a change in quality and emphasis of the repeated line, were never sure how the change had occurred.

This style of handling _rubato_ can only be done by a singer who has extraordinary control of the _laya_. For the finely sensed ability to divide time by feeling and measure need not be based on _tala_ at all, that is in the strict relationship between the _khali_ and _sam_ of any structure.

Saigal was believed to be weak in _tala_. But that was because he rarely ever counted. We have often come across _pakhwaj_ and _tabla_ wizards who never count, yet are in hair breadth control of _tala_. Consider the pieces "kithine is gali men" or "shukriya hasti ka" or that trim little piece in _malkaus_ that begins "jag aur dekh zara." How tightly and sharply the keen edge of _tala_ and _laya_ join with the variations in the phrases and yet how delicately differentiated the changes in each line are. In order to steal time effectively the singer must have a strongly established _laya_ to steal from.

Saigal made sure that it was there. This is true even when he speaks lines as in "ah ko chahiye."

This technique always provided surprise and suspense. If you examine the song, and its cadence, the minute variations are what make it a striking song. The slight touch of tune merely lubricates the text.

Another significant feature of Saigal's vocalism that cannot be omitted was his remarkable vibrato. Vibrato is called _kampana_ in Sanskrit. There are several varieties of this element in voice. There is a fast _kampana_ in which the amplitude of the pulsations are narrow. There is a wider kind of _kampana_ in which the pulsations are slower. Pankaj Mullick used a _kampana_ which was wider and slower than Saigal's.

Saigal used vibrato with great restraint. He never used it as an aspect of grace or ornamentation. One of the dangers of too obvious a use of _kampana_ is that it indicates an element of vocal vainglory. So in Indian music it has to be used with great circumspection. Saigal's vibrato occurred somewhat beneath the surface of his voice, so that the voice did not undulate markedly. It merely throbbed like a wound. It was a vibrato that behaved like the ripples in a pond at the point of impact of a stone thrown into it-expanding outwards from an imaginary centre of each note.

In the upper register of the octave Saigal's vibrato widened a little but always the pulsations were within the voice hidden inside a thin membrane of voice.

The only recording that reveals a certain strain in Saigal's voice was the earliest one in the film 'Karwan-e-Hayat', the song in that tearing _bhairavi_ entitled "hairatey nazara." The song was sung as low as the first white note of the harmonium. Yet the voice strains in going up and at a certain point shows a break. He was in

pretty bad voice at the recording of that song.

Yet observe the detail of the _bhairavi_, filling and fleshing out the meaning of the text. Without strain the _rubato_ takes over where the voice just about makes it. It makes a point of the truth that voice, or its condition, at any given moment is not important to the power of a statement. As long as the voice is true, the message gets across without ambiguity, and the meaning makes its own allure.

You have to be very observant to notice that this lovely song, so touchingly rendered, was sung in a voice which for Saigal was a poor voice. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "241".

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 8

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok[40])

babula mora Here is a quotation:

"Let this man be careful to remember that the higher he goes

on the scale, let him become softer and softer in his touch

rather than strident.

Let him also be careful to move his voice gently from the

high notes to the lower ones, using always his vowels to

glide down, never his consonants.

Let every word be distinctly uttered, clearly understood,

and no syllable lost in transit.

If he repeats a line, let it in the repeating become more

striking than the first time, otherwise he is no singer.

He who does not know how to steal time honourably is no

singer as long he makes proper restitution of all that he

has stolen. [Something wrong in the sentence.]

Such a man will not be forgotten." If Saigal had ever advised a young and struggling singer, these words may have been properly used by him in his advice. For he applied every one of these ideas in his singing style plus some more. Yet this advice was given more than two hundred years ago by Pier Francesco Tosi of the Bologna Philharmonic Society in his "Observation on xxxxxx [ink blot!]. "Song." published in 1723: the translation of the text from the original Italian is loose and general, but the meaning leaves no one in any doubt what Tosi meant and was telling us to do.

Whether Saigal did all this by gift or instinct is of little importance at this point. At least by the time the world began to hear his voice, he had developed so many facets of his nature to such a high level of conscious capacity that he himself and what he did with his music all seemed simple. Simplicity is the hardest thing in the world to acquire.

All arts, all crafts, all technics and all skills are really headed through the ultimate sophistication and complexity towards a redeeming simplicity in their development. The saint and the singer alike is after this state of unguarded awareness about which religions often bear witness. Singers can do little better than sing these truths in between the lines of their songs. No one in recent times in the field of packed so much truth in between the lines of his song as this man did.

40Source: K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara

Saigal died on January 18, 1946. He was forty-two years old at the time. He was probably a diabetic from a very early age for he suffered excruciatingly from carbuncles all his life and used often to be in great pain. People said it was his drinking that killed him early. But at the time he sang "jokhan robona ami" no one could have guessed that he was in such a tearing hurry. But the song was, for him, prophetic beyond measure. But by the time he had sung "jab dil hi toot gaya" he was far gone irretrievably lost to liver disease which was diagnosed as cirrhosis.

In his last years in Bombay his voice had darkened to a warm viola-like voice. The pitch had noticeably declined and that silvery ring had gone. But yet when he sang that chorus "kya ham ne bigada hai" it was the MGM lion singing, deep, resonant and booming like the king he was. The All India Radio announced his passing in its morning bulletin.

All these years later, at five minutes to eight in the morning, Radio Ceylon plays a Saigal record. You can hear him in Kabul, in Nairobi, in Kuwait, in Tangier, and Rabat. The Teheran Radio has played his Persian _ghazals_. His voice is well-known in Jakarta and Fiji and it is good to see his familiar figure dressed as Shah Jahan, arranged along with other records at Sam Goody's store in New York. On 18 January every year, the All India Radio remembers him. Who said he is dead? ----------

RMIM Archive Article "242".

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara 9

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok[41])

I am forced to admit, with considerable chagrin, that I have failed in determining the year in which Saigal left us. All the sources I have consulted agree on the day and the month: January 18. The sources, however, are divided regarding the year between 1946 and 1947. Two of the sources I consulted individually gave me the year as 1947. The first element of doubt was injected by the Menon book on Saigal, which gave the year as 1946. Since I had (and have!) more trust in my sources, I went ahead with the claim that Saigal passed away half a century ago. The next twist for me came when I borrowed an old Saigal LP from a friend just a couple of days ago. Although the LP was totally innocent of any P-stats, HMV did include a brief write-up on Saigal and his period was given as 1904-46. At this stage, I consulted the entry on Saigal in the BFI Encyclopaedia: again, 1904-46. So, all the print media seemed to be consistent in saying 1946 and I was about to post a correction on RMIM when I received from Sreenivas Paruchuri the Susheela Mishra article from The Hindu. It starts by talking about the fiftieth anniversary of Saigal's death and, in case there is any ambiguity in the expression as to the date (actually, there isn't), toward the end it gives the date of death as 18th January 1947. So, friends, let us do some research and settle the question definitively. Ashok ---------- From: sreeni@ktpsp1.uni-paderborn.de (Sreenivas) I checked some other sources, mostly verbal, apart from the ones you quoted (BFI's encyclopaedia, Menon's book, the LP jackets, S.Mishra's article, etc..). I also see that Dr. Surjit Singh confirms the year of death as 1947, quoting Harmindar S's _Geet Kosh_. All my verbal sources quote the year as 1947. In print I could find only one source (quoted below) which says the same. But I must also say that the amount of bibliography I have with me here is very limited. But, First those who quote it as 1946: I started going through different discographies of KLS I have; Alain Danielou's book published by UNICEF in 1952 (it does n't quote the year of death at all), Kinnear's weel-known work _Discography of Hindusthani and Karnatic Music 1950-1985_ quotes it as 1946 and Kinnear in his EXTENSIVE (which includes all 78rpms) discography in the SIRC Journal (issue 8, 1992) quotes the year as 1946. But Kinnear is n't a biographer but a discographer. And his source was Menon's book. BTW, how about listing all the songs sung by KLS, including the non-Film numbers! There are n't many. In TM Ramachandran's, a well known film journalist, _70years of Indian Cinema_ the year of KLS' and Master Vinayak's year of death was mentioned as 1947. Does anyone have the recording of 4 part TV Serial: _Gata Jaye Banjara_ aired in 1990. It was visualised by Sidharth Kak, documenting the six decades of Hindi film songs. The first part was almost dedicated to KLS. If anyone has it please send me a brief message. Perhaps we can work out an exchange. Thanks and Regards, Sreenivas E-Mail: sreeni@ktp.uni-paderborn.de

41Source: K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara

RMIM Archive Article "243".

K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara Appendix

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok[42])

The title of the appendix is somewhat misleading. First half of it actually turns out to be partly a rehash of material in the chapters, but some stuff is new. The author turns to Saigal's records in the second half, but unfortunately there is no disco- graphy, leave alone a list of Saigal songs. That work perhaps remains to be done; what you will find here are Menon's comments on some then-commonly available recordings of Saigal.

I have received a few e-mails inquiring about the availability of the book. (I'd like to believe tha the postings will cause an increase in the sale of the book, rather than a decrease!) I came to know from Sreenivas Paruchuri that the second edition of the book came out in 1989 under the banner of Hind Pocket Books. I don't know if it is a revised edition; would be interesting to check what he says about Saigal's year of death, at least! Ashok ----------

:Appendix The Records of K. L. Saigal

Today Saigal's extant phonograph records form the major premise for judging the degree and quality of his contribution to our music. It must be remembered that to the public of his day he was known primarily as an actor who also sang songs. This was nothing unusual at that time. Most theatrical performers of his day and age sing songs to embellish the scenes in which they played and several of them were accomplished singers in their own right. So it was always through his films in which he was cast that the public heard him sing and from the phonograph records that were released together with the films.

These records became wild best-sellers all over the country.

During his lifetime these records were still shellac and turned approximately 78 times a minute. Today these have been re-issued with the aid of much more sophisticated reproduction devices in contemporary vinyl and turn at 33 and 45 times a minute.

The songs that Saigal sang in his records often differ in some respects from the same songs in the films. The songs on the screen were, as can be expected, often interspersed with dialogue and movement and many of them were engagingly abbreviated. The pacing also differed in many cases. A _meend_ here was shortened, and there a _gamak_ was substituted with a trill, a _murki_ by silence, sometimes an additional phrase of variation made a scene light-hearted, sometimes merely sadder. There are songs in which Saigal sings above a hardly audible bubble of suppressed mirth without in any way affecting the delivery or the tonal attributes of the song.

In some cases the film songs are sung in a slightly higher pitch, particularly when the scene was being shot out-doors. This higher pitch of the scale gave his rendition a troubadorial air, a fleeting mortal quality and often the sadness of minstrelsy. In this records of the same songs the style becomes properly prim and conservative.

There are many Indians who do not know that Saigal sang outside the films and that several of these songs have been recorded and preserved for posterity. They think that he sang only as part of his film roles. It is, however, in these songs, the non-film songs, that Saigal can be recognised primarily as a singer and only at one remove as an actor. There is often a debate whether Saigal was a good actor. Some say he was, some say he was not. It seems to depend upon the point of view. We tend to forget in making these judgements that the talkies

42Source: K. L. Saigal: the pilgrim of the swara

had just arrived in India at the time Saigal was singing his songs and that the films we are criticising with the prescience of the 70s were actually made in the 30s, during and after a world-wide depression, in a country with negligible resources and with budgets that would make a contemporary producer burst into tears. Hand-held cameras, no trolleys, no zooming, no dissolves, no booms, the microphone into which Saigal sang the immortal and disturbing "baabula mora" was carried by hand behind him and the camera likewise. In the film there was a wind machine that was used to mimic a Nor'wester in the story which apparently did not have a rheostat and sent the famous Saigal wig flying, interrupting the song midway. There were no Kleig lights and the material with which locales were reproduced on the New Theatres lot in Tollygunge looked cheap and tawdry. But yet the dramatic impact of the scene was at par with many films we see today on our screens.

Also this debate lies on the same plane as the other one of whether Saigal suffered for not being trained in classical music in the conventional _gharana_ style of the _guru-shishya_. This is because people do not recognise that Saigal's music was taught to him by the holistic techniques of the Yesevi _sufi_s. It was not _raga vidya_. His work was directed towards the mastery of the _swara_ and its magical relationships to other _swaras_ of the musical scale. Salman Yousuf who initiated him into this practice by means of a _zikr_ was a _sufi_ of the Yesevi order which uses music as a means to attain a certain type of consciousness of their selves. They do not use music to perform, but to transform. The Yesevis like the _naqshabandis_ and the _suhrawardys_ and other orders of _sufi_s exist to this day in the Punjab area and in Jammu and Kashmir in a belt that stretches through Peshawar across the Khyber into Afghanistan and beyond into the Central Asian Highlands.

Since music to the Yesevi _sufis_ was only a means whereby they may obtain a cognitive vision of the nature of the true relationships in the world around them and in the inner world of the spirit, those who practise some of these techniques, even superficially, become transformed beings in varying degrees and carry with them a strange quality of presence and appeal. Saigal merely applied the _swara_ he had gained by the ceaseless practice of the _zikr_ to the prevailing ethos of the _raga_. So when you heard him sing, the power and the enchantment of his music was not because he knew _raga_ or the complexities of classical music as taught by the _gharanas_. It was the inaudible emotional attraction of the highly perfected _swaras_, which had been ruthlessly cleaned and purified to such a degree that they gleamed with the meaning and significance of Saigal's inner being. Let us not forget that this after all is the true meaning of _swara_, it was not being merely _surel_ or having a true pitch. And everyone knows that our _ragas_ are made of _swaras_ and note out of musical notes alone. The Sanskrit root _swa_ stands for the "self" and the root _ra_ stands for the verb "to offer". So that if you have a self to offer, then it is possible to offer this self through the _swaras_ of our music. But we must not forget that very few of us have any self to speak of, except as a collection of appetites and reactions to which we give our exalted names.

The _zikr_ and its incessant practice had given Saigal a self to sing about and that was what we actually heard in his voice and that also was the reason why when that voice passed through even the rudiments of _raga_, it was filled with pain, becoming an inconsolable cry and over the decades would not die like the voices of other singers, because the selves of creatures do not die. It is always the form, the receptacles that pass and wither. The self remains. So thiry years after him his voice remains a part of our time and our history.

Since Saigal did not seem to practise like other musicians of our culture, people thought he was born that way, that he was a peculiar example of the time warp or an incarnation of a _gandharva_ or something equally silly and naive.

But it was this curious fact of his life which was really very unobtrusive, almost secretive, that gave his presence on the screen and outside a certain wholeness and tranquility, an easy naturalness of gait and carriage. In acting, his face was mostly still. He never did much emoting with the muscles of his face, the cocking of

eyebrows, the crinkling of eyes, the self- conscious smirks and grimaces which make some of our actors such dedicated hams that seeing them go through their paces makes the audience sorry for their total ineptitude. Saigal never had to take recourse to these desperate methods. In the result he carried a low-key conviction and integrity and since sang his songs himself while the scene was being shot, it seemed quick with a delicate tension and a subtle stab of truth which was somehow more powerful than mere acting. To understand Saigal's true contribution to India's light music it is important to hear the songs that he sang outside the ambit of his films. We feel sure that acting for Saigal was a mere profession and it was music that was his life.

Rabindra Sangeet, the _hori_, the _kirtan_, the _baul_, the _thumri_, the _bhajan_, the _geet_, the _ghazal_, the Pujabee, the Bengali, the Tamil, the Urdu, the Persian-he sang in all these styles and all these languages impeccably. The technique of singing _ghazals_ the way Saigal first sang them could be said to have been his own innovation. Earlier, _ghazals_ were recited exclusively for their texts, the noble words of passion, sorrow, or despair. In fact, there is a school of thought that believes that _ghazals_ should never be sung, that words and their meanings are the substance of _ghazal_, that a _raga_, a tune and a _tala_ detracts and diminishes the impact of the meaning of the _ghazal_. This is a moot point. Meaning lies in several levels.

Apart from the one-to-one meaning of the dictionary or the structure of the line, words also have a resonance in deeper levels of the being. This is not the strict meaning of the word as in a dictionary. This is an experience, a total condition of awareness of the meaning of the word.

There is very little doubt that Saigal's musical interpretation of the _ghazal_ enriched this resonance. And if Ghalib had heard him sing, for example, the tightly traversing _ghazal_, "nuqta chi hai gham-e-dil", he would have exulted to know how deeply and directly without mediation, Saigal was giving form and content to the meaning of his words. The musical content of Saigal's _ghazal_ lay low like the flame under a kettle of boiling water. It was the bubbling of the text with the pain and understanding of its composer that made you realise that there was the flame of a tune underneath the poignant march of exquisite metres. The music was never obtrusive, never strident or too clever and was always cut sheet to the text.

Almost any of his songs will stand this test of music subordinating to text, but there is a song in _bageshri_ that comes to mind. It is a Seemab _ghazal_ and begins "jalwa go hai dil me.n marte hi andhera." Here is a song whose tune carries its text on its head as it were, often the tune standing still to let the words go on ahead. There are a hundred examples of this technique Saigal used with his songs, each time meticulously conscious of his responsibilities as a singer to the words of the poet.

Classical singers are often notoriously insensitive to the words of a composition in their belief that a composition is a vehicle for a _raga_. In fact the converse is true. It is the _raga_ that is the vehicle for a composition and the belief that knowledge of _raga_ and performing skill is sufficient, points to a poor apprehension of the nature of our music.

Saigal was too much of a poet himself and had a high sense of truth to a poems's secret life which he would not dishonour. He loved the words of a poem in the way a raindrop loves a window pane, those magic globes of infinite beauty and order, hanging on to the transparent glass surface as though for its very life. It was somewhat in this fashion that Saigal loved the immortal words of Ghalib, Seemab, Tagore, Bedam, Arzu, Hafiz, Prnab, or Nazrul, as though for his very life. Saigal made their poems musically so significant that suddenly people understood Ghalib better than merely reading him. He was the first contemporary singer who could be said to have invented the musical law of speech determining its countless tones and emphasis, its endless nuances of emotions.

Most of his songs were in classical _ragas_ and structured with canny art and innovation. Whether it was

Ghalib or Nazrul, Saigal carefully brought out the _raga_ and its chief characteristics with incredible economy and grace. Among his records you can find many _bhairavis_, _kafis_ of every hue and quality, _bhimpalasis_, _mand_, yaman, and at least one _malkaus_ composed on the upper tetrachord. There ar pure _pilus_, and _pilus_ with an undertow of _multani_; there is a _bageshri_ and of course the straight form to shoulder _bahar_ and _shankara_ of Tansen.

But these characteristics as mentioned earlier are more apparent in the non-film songs of Saigal, songs that were of his own choosing and oftentimes of his own composing. At least some of these songs he had inherited from his childhood in Jammu-and later from his youth in the Punjab, the backwash of a hundred _baithaks_ and music conference, from Jullunder, the Harvallabh, from Allahabad's Prayag Sangeet Samiti, from Patna Music Conferences, from Moradabad, from his penniless days in Kanpur, from Bareilly, from Lucknow from the section of town where the dancing girls lived, from beggars who sang the _baul_, from musk sellers who boasted that they had come from Khorasan, but who also mysteriously turned out to be disquietingly moving singers.

There is the story of the carpet seller who cam walking up Jotin Das Road, one Sunday morning, an itinerant singer with a catch in his throat, who also wove the carpets he sold, who sang with such power and truth that the windows and doors of the houses in the street filled with men and women and hordes of children who left their work and their play to hear this strange man sing. He said he had come from Khive and sang from one of the tales of Gilgamesh. He taught Saigal the words of a few songs in Persian and when in one of those characteristic unthinking response for which Saigal was by this time well-known, he withdrew a ring of unknown value from his fingers and gave it to the singer, the ring at once returned mysteriously back to Saigal's own finger. When this happened again and again a few times and Saigal stood amazed, the carpet seller smiled and gave Saigal the ring. He would not be paid. He smiled knowingly and left the street never returning. Stories of this kind abound in Saigal's life.

Saigal had always been a man in love with death. Not the sick and despairing attraction the suicides have for death. His was a strange hypnotized fascination with the mystery of mysteries. Before that final totaliser he stood dismayed like a child before a thundering waterfall. In his last years in Bombay he used to make a ritual of spending some time at the cremation ground on the seaside near Mahim, where night and day bodies smoldered in embers and ashes and the wind moaned from the sea smelling of smoke and bleached bones. It is not possible to practise certain kinds of _zikr_ without producing profound changes in the psychic and spiritual worlds of the practitioner and there is no doubt the the flux and perishing of life's tenderest and most cherished elements was what held Saigal in thrall, so that even while he drank and to some extent can be said to have hastened his end, there was no fear in him, there was only a speechless sense of wonder at this final terminal mystery of all.

You will find that the accompaniment of the songs of Saigal that were not of the cinema is always catholic and severe. For a person who was an actor pampered by the New Theatres orchestra, the richest and the most voluptuous at the time, and the easy- going ways of the cinema. It was somewhat noteworthy that it never struck him to smuggle in a redundant violin or a flute to accompany his own songs. For he used only a _tanpura_, so softly played that you had to strain your ears and listen intently to catch the scattered silver of its drone. He accompanied himself on a harmonium, a plain Dwarkin-flute, black in colour with a shift key and concertina bellows. A very unimpressive instrument when compared to the chrome and velvet, the rich nutty browns of contemporary instruments. And of course there was the _tabla_. Now and then rarely he used a _sarangi_ which followed him about without a single assertive phrase or turn.

The original recordings which were taken on wax and carried across town from Tollygunge to Dum Dum in the sweltering humidity of the Gangetic delta, often melted on the way and often Saigal had to sing the song over

again this time in the studios of HMV.

Considering the primitive equipment of the day these are first rate recordings, but the re-issues are of exceptional fidelity so that if you play these records on a fairly good hi-fi system even with a very moderate output, the voice sizzles and crackles like static and here there you can hear a gentle clearing of throat or the hiss of a fast breath before a new line began.

Saigal managed to develop what the Italians call _La Voce Bianca_ or the White Voice. This is the voice which in boy choirs in Italy fill the remote cornices of cathedrals and echoes in the sacristy and hose pianissimos whisper and moan in your ears long after the _Te Deum_ is over and when you emerge into the blazing sunlight the voice follows you like a scent and hides in your memory like a coiled serpent. Saigal's voice was the Indian version of the White Voice of the Italians. And he used several voices with which to sing and any discography of Saigal records however select offers the most disturbing challenges of selection. Each one of his songs, even the most trivial compositions say something unique about music. Sometimes this may merely be a special technique of voice production or it may be a sudden and surprising life in an old and well remembered note. It may just be a bell-like chime in a word like _sapna_ or in a word like _chanda_, or it may be a whole phrase like "paar basat hai desh sunehra", a sudden feel of the corn orient with immortal wheat, that endears the song to you and you would return to it hungrily again and again. It is not difficult to remember a _komal gandhar_, in a _hori_, in _kafi_ that booms as though from within a cave, that makes you marvel at its glittering purity. The phrasing could delight you in one song, or the mere musical ingenuity of a composition in another, the use of _raga_ in a third, or the sad, sad, but somehow consoling _meend_ of a _bhajan_ in _kafi_.

The point is that you can never be submitted to a Saigal song without at least one unique memorable aspect which only that particular song embodies matchlessly. That is why the most ingeniously contrived selection would still suffer from incompleteness. The problem is that when you leave out one or another of his songs, you would not even be representing the personal preferences of the selector.

However, for anyone who wishes to understand and enjoy Saigal, the songs that are left out in this select discography are as important as the ones that are included. There are several songs that have not been re-issued in long or extended play from their original standard play. These have been phased out of the shellac and cannot be found in record stores anymore and reside with collectors. For a Saigal fan no discography is necessary and for one who is yet to turn to him, no discography is enough. However, it is possible to go directly to Saigal by way of three long playing records issued by The Gramophone Company of India on Angel Labels. Their code numbers are as follows: Code no. EAHA-1001: The Golden Voice of K. L. Saigal, Volume I Code no. EAHA-1002: The Golden Voice of K. L. Saigal, Volume II Code no. EAHA-1004: The Golden Voice of K. L. Saigal, Volume III These records encompass 36 songs of Saigal mainly from the films.

Some features of a few of these songs may be worth noting. Listen to Saigal singing "prem nagar me" from the film 'Chandidas'. This is a duet and you may comfortable ignore the female voice. It jangles on the nerves, but the whole song changes in significance as soon as Saigal enters it along halfway towards finishing. It is a high-pitched thin voice and seems to be sung at the limit of his pitch. Compare this song with voice with which Saigal sings the Ghalib _ghazal_ "nuqta chi hai" from the film 'Yehoodi Ki Ladki'. It is difficult to believe that the two songs are sung by the same man.

Then let us go on to the strangely moving _yaman_ entitled "radhey rani dey dalo na" from the film 'Pooran Bhagat' and compare this song with the _madhya laya teen tala khayal_ "jhula na jhulay," which is not from a film. The contrast needs no pointing out. They are unbelievably different voices. Now let us take a song which is almost, but not quite, speech. Take "sukh ke dukh ke ab din bitat nahi" from the film 'Devdas'

and contrast it with Saigal speaking and singing in _tin tala_ in the song entitled "ek raje ka beta lekar" from the film 'President'.

If you strain your ears you can hear a nuance of suppressed laughter underneath the song.

Now let us take two _bhairavis_, since Saigal admitted his particular attraction to this _raga_. Take the song "hairathey nazara" in a voice which in production and quality is so different from the immortal "babula mora." The first song is from the film 'Korwan-e-Hayat' (sic) and the second is from the film 'The Street Singer'. It is interesting to observe the taut bowstring tension of the notes of the song "main kya janoo kya jadoo hai" from the film 'Zindagi', and song "karoon kya aas nirasha bhayi" from the film 'Dushman.' The relaxed tone of the second contrasts sharply with the tight and shining vigour of the first. Listen to the power, the near basso baritone that sounds so much like the voice of the late Faiyaz Khan in the song "ye tasaruff allah allah" from the film 'Yehoodi Ki Ladki', and compare it to the lilting tenor of "tarapath bitey din rain" from the film 'Chandidas.' Listen in this song for one of the most dramatic _meends_ in motion picture music history in India.

Now coming to the extended play issues, the following are noteworthy: Code no. H-7 1. lakh sahi pee ki batiya 2. lag gayee chot 3. apni hasti ka agar husn numaaaya 4. ishq mujh ko nahin wahishath

Each of the four above are memorable songs. The first in _khamaj_ is a wild beckoning _thumri_ which for its strange and compelling appeal is difficult to match. It is sung with a curious abandon, the incipient wildness of the inconsolable. It stands in marked contrast with the last song in the list above, a galloping _dadra_ that flows with the rhythm of a steeple chase, sung against a lusty _madhyama_ on the _tanpura_ in the background. Code no. LH-8 1. shama ka jalna hai 2. rahamat pey teri 3. ghar ye tera sada na mera hai 4. aah ko chahiye ek umr

The most powerful rendering in this group of songs is the second beginning "rahamat pey teri". Its voice is Faiyaz Khan all over again. There is a baleful _komal gandhar_ which is worth waiting for. It is a note sung with striking probity. The first one, "shama ka jalna hai", and the third one, "ghar ye tera sada na mera hai", are both songs sung in the muted crooning coice, the speaking pitch which Saigal used with such devastating clarity and timbre. Like all Saigal songs tuned on the _madhyama_ they are both ecstatic and devout at the same time.

The last song, the Ghalib _ghazal_, "aah ko chahiye", is notable. The television retrospective entitled 'Bhulaye Na Baney' used this song to introduce its credit titles and putit through an echo mike. The song boomed lugubriously through the Saigal flat in Matunga while the camera hovered tenderly over his portrait brushing across his harmonium and _tanpura_, while Ghalib on the soundtrack seemed to come across the abyss of death whispering with ghostly intonation, the stately metres of the poem. This technique, while used lavishly in contemporary cinema music, added nothing to the song as Saigal first sang it plainly on the harmonium. Code no. LH-40 1. har ek baat pey 2. woh aakey khwab me 3. dil se teri nigah 4. bahut is galey me kiye

The two Ggalib _ghazals_ in this record are unforgettable, powerfully rendered with dramatic _taans_ and _meends_ trimly set to _tala_ and racing along swiftly into last-line climaxes like a mystery novel. The third Ghalib ghazal beginning "dil se teri nigah" is composed in a lilting _kaharwa_ and is sung with gentle humour and restraint and lively understatements that are intriguing and evocative. The fourth piece is a miracle of _rubato_, a marvellous exercise in pithy phrasing and stolen _matras_. Code no. LH-26 1. phir mujhey diday tar 2. kaun bujhave rama 3. nuqta chi hai gam-e-dil 4. ye staruff allah allah

All these four songs are absolute gems. If all Saigal records were to be destroyed, I could happily live with

this one saved from destruction. The Ghalib _ghazal_ "phir mujhey" is sung in a voice for which there is no parallel even in Saigal's own records. It stands in a category by itself. Nothing can compare with this extraordinary song. Then there is "kaun bujhaye rama" sung in _pilu_, a prayer it seems from its exquisite petitioning air, its notes pure as starlight huskily enveloping a gentle grainy baritone, the _tanpura_ and the _tabla_ and the harmonium and the voice all dissolving in a single stream of visionary beauty. The next, "ye tasaruff allah allah", is sung again in Faiyaz Khan's voice almost basso baritone with an incredible thickness of amplitude. Particularly notable is the recurring _madhyama_ where the song comes to a contingent state of rest. The organ tones of that _madhyama_ is notably different from to the _madhyama_ in which "kaun bujhaye" is structured, both in texture and in feel.

Even this limited discography will be incomplete if a fe Bengali songs of Saigal are not included. There is a long playing record, containing _Rabindra sangeet_ of Saigal, a disc which shares with the maestro Pankaj Mullick. This is an important record to hear for you can hear the Saigal rendering of the Tagore masterpieces for which you cannot easily find parallels. The record is called "A Tribute to Tagore" and is a Hindustan Musical Products issue, whose code no. is HX-8.

There are five songs in this record sung by Saigal (and six by inimitable Pankaj Mullick): 1. ami tomay joto 2. ektuku chhonya lagey 3. tomar binay gan chhilo 4. aaj khela bhangar khela 5. edin aji kon gharey go

These five songs compare and contrast in singing styles. The most fascinating among them is the second one in a ravishing _dadra_ with a strong folk flavour. These songs follow the _Rabindra sangeet_ score, but are sung with a remarkable directness, no flourishes, not too much decoration, plain, straight from the shoulder. _Rabindra sangeet_ was taught to Saigal by Pankaj Mullick and the maestro's inimitable characteristics can be recognised in Saigal's sining, but there is a winsome freedom and compactness in the Saigal renderings which make them very distinctive.

Another record in Bengali that is important and may not be omitted is the Hindustan Record Extended Play, LA-69. 1. ay peyechi anon jala 2 naiba ghamaley priyo 3. jakhan robona ami 4. bandhinu michey ghar These pieces portray Saigal's Bengali songs at a very high level of excellence. There are four distinctive styles in these four songs. They are also rendered in at least three different kinds of voices. The most fascinating change in voice is the one at the end "badhinu michey ghar" in which Saigal sings with a flute-like voice, a sad forlorn ditty with an intricate technique of _rubato_ and distant _meends_ that are over the song in straight uninterrupted trajectories.

With these songs as a beginning a good entry into the Saigal world can be made, after which no further guidance or help is needed. Saigal will enter your life and he will remain a welcome and an eternal guest, not for the weekend, not for the vacation, but for life. Your musical world would have changed once and for all time, and that will change you too.

When he died it was a strange thing that had departed this world. The yeast was out of the bread of music. A presence of freedom and wonder of surprising ability and gift had gone out. An era had ended. A new one is yet to begin. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "244".

If its 7:56 it must be Saigal

Posted by: apn@cs.buffalo.edu (Ajay P Nerurkar[43])

Author: Raju Bharatan

Greetings to everyone and a sincere note of gracias to Ashok Dhareshwar for that marathon typing effort. Here is an article snitched from the TOI, Bombay, by Raju Bharatan. It tells us lit- tle that is new and Bharatan's writing style is not what one can honestly call absorbing. (The words are his own, though). It does, however, support my conjecture that this is indeed the year of Saigal's fiftieth death anniversary. Also if you have spent sleepless nights wondering whether Saigal ever sang for Anil Biswas, read on. Ajay

---------- ----------

If it's 7:56 a.m., it must be Saigal

- Raju Bharatan ---------- Yesterday was a Saturday of rare poignance. It marked 50 years since Kundan Lal Saigal died, on January 18, 1947. If Saigal thus passed away nearly seven months before India became independent, it was just seven days after freedom that Lata Mangeshkar came to record her first Hindi song as a playback singer : "Pa laagu kar jore re Shyam mose na khelo hori re" -- under the baton of Datta Davjekar for Vasant Joglekar's `Aap Ki Seva Mein'. Lata since, has sung Saigal for HMV. It was but natural that she should have done so, considering that Lata has always looked upon Saigal, alongside Noorjehan, as her vocal mentor. "I never got the honour to learn music from Saigal saheb," Lata has noted." But constantly listening to his songs kindled in me the desire to learn light music and, in this sphere, I regard Saigal saheb as my guru. My father, the late Dinanath Mangeshkar, was extremely fond of Saigal saheb's music and often used to request me to sing his songs. The feeling and emotion Saigal saheb put into his rendition with such magical effect will, perhaps, never be equalled by anyone." As Lata paid that tribute to Saigal in the `Vishesh Jaymala' pro- gramme of Vividh Bharati on the occasion of her silver jubilee in 1967, she sang, over the air, a snatch of Saigal's `Zindagi' evergreen "So jaa raajkumari so jaa". And proceeded to play the Saigal original of this song for listeners to savour the differ- ence between her and him! As Lata did this, the realisation sud- denly dawned upon listeners that, in the case of Saigal, the legend is the reality. It has been so for 50 years and more. For all that, it would be no more than the unvarnished truth to state that, where quality music for a whole generation ended with Saigal, it began for a whole new generation with Lata. Stalwart Naushad Ali has drawn attention to how Saigal's vocals, in their range could extend to eight octaves. [Surely, he's joking! - A] Also how only Lata, among the latter-day singers, could come close to touching that eighth octave. Onkar Prasad Nayyar brought us the nearest thing to Saigal when he got C.H.Atma to articulate, under his music direction in Lahore, "Preetam aan milo". "Didn't Atma have the essence of Saigal in him ?" I asked Nayyar. "Nonsense!" came back Nayyar. "Atma, at best, was a copy of Saigal - and not a very good copy at that!" C.H. Atma gripped you, nonetheless, in "Preetam aan milo". And that is a measure of the resonant sway Saigal exercised. The per- former who came closest to duplicating Saigal, even while that icon was living, was perhaps Mukesh in Anil Biswas' famous Raag Darbari creation for `Pehli Nazar' (1945) : "Dil jalta hai to jalne de". This one, or some other Saigal 'unforgettable' was religiously played by vigilant Radio Ceylon announcer Gopal Sharma, at 7:56 each morning during the 'Purani Filmon Ke Geet' programme. For my niece Madhushalini, living in the Jayanagar sector of Bangalore, the announcement of the Saigal song was the desperate signal to rush out and catch her school bus! It so happened that, one morn- ing, Gopal Sharmal played Mukesh's "Dil jalta hai to jalne de" just five minutes before he came up with the `Yahudi Ki Ladki' Saigal classic, "Nuktacheen hai gham-e-

43Source: Times of India

dil usko sunaye na bane" - for listeners to compare and contrast Mukesh and Saigal. And my niece's response to Mukesh's song a la Saigal, was an educa- tion in itself. "Mummy, mummy!" she cried out. "I'm so late for school today, hear how the Saigal song is already playing, how can I still be here!" To that nine-year-old young lady, Mukesh was Saigal and Saigal was Mukesh. Yet Madhushalini reflected the thinking of a whole new generation impatient of Saigal. You needed a very fine ear for music to appreciate the way Saigal touched the subtleties of your imagination. How is that, while a whole generation so nuanced remained hooked on Saigal, the generation to come could not care less for this singer ? The point about the music Saigal vocalised is that it needed rapt attention. In other words, you just could not listen to Saigal casually. The words were no less important than the music, as he came over in a strain of "Ek bangla bane nyara" (from `President'). Next, you eagerly waited for Saigal to chip in with "Dukh ki nadiya jeevan naiya" even as Pankaj Mullick and Uma Sashi led the way with "Duniya rang rangeeli baba duniya rang rangeeli" (from `Dhartimata'). Likewise, you sat poised in front of the radio for that melancholy-tinged laughter of Saigal in "Dukh ke ab din beetat nahin". The man who wrote "Dukh ke ab din beetat nahin", Kidar Sharma, makes compulsive listening as he describes how "hamara Kundan" brought his own inimitable touch to the song - as to another one of his songs tuned by sarod virtuoso Timir Baran for `Devdas' : "Baalam aaye baso more man mein". The spell cast by Saigal thus abides half a century after the music he made for New Theatres in Calcutta and Ranjit Movietone in Bombay. Naushad is the only composer living for whom both Saigal and Noorjehan sang. [So, a sufficient condition for Saigal to have never sung for Anilda is

for Noorjehan to *have* sung for him -A] According to Naushad, even when Saigal was in front of the play-back mike, he needed a dummy harmonium (with dummy keys) for his fingers to feel the thing and get going. Such timeless `Shahjehan' renditions by Saigal as "Jab dil hi toot gaya" (in Bhairavi); "Ae dil-e-beqaraar jhoom" (in Bihag); "Chaah barbaad karegi humein maaloom na tha" (in Bageshri); "Gham diye mustaqil kitna naazuk hai dil" (in Kafi) were all recordings done by Naushad with a dummy harmonium in front of Saigal. Even Talat Mahmood has candidly admitted that his aura as the ghazal king derived from the initial inspiration he drew from the vocals of Saigal. Kishore Kumar too looked up to Saigal. Yet Kishore buffs cannot stand Saigal! Nor, to be fair, could a whole new listenership (that grew up in the mid-'50s). For this young audience, Lata Mangeshkar became the vocal touchstone. Sai- gal, this young audience (weaned on Talat Mahmood, Mukesh, Mohammed Rafi, Manna Dey and Hemant Kumar) could not follow at all! They could not follow Saigal because, perhaps, they lacked the patience and percipience needed to listen enthralled, to some- thing like "Baabul mora naihar chhoto jaaye" that made Saigal a `Street Singer' without peer. `Street Singer' was the 1938 New Theatres classic in which Saigal teamed up so well with another charismatic singing star, Kanan Devi. Kanan, going solo, dom-inated this movie with her vibrant vocals; yet it is via Saigal's "Baabul mora" and "Jeevan bin madhur na baaje" that `Street Singer' is remembered, nearly 60 years after the film wa released. Nore is it as if Saigal took any particular care of his voice. Like Lata, he was very fond of 'achchars' (pickles). But where Lata controlled her palate in the interests of preserving her voice quality, Saigal had the habit of stealing into the kitchen and gobbling up the oiliest of 'achchars'! Yet nothing happened to his voice. Because it was God-given. Saigal's remarkable con- trol over his vocals derived from the fact that he was not so much a trained as a natural singer. Another singing star emerging during his end-days, Suraiya, was totally without formal training in music. Naturally, therefore, the thought of singing with a titan like Saigal scared Suraiya out of her wits - as she came to be his co-star in `Parwana', which turned out to be tha idol's last film. The moment she heard that Saigal was her `Parwana' co-star, Suraiya told music direc- tor Khursheed Anwar that all her songs must be solos in the movie ("No duets with Saigal saheb, please!"). Thus `Parwana' ended up with four solos by Saigal and four by Suraiya. Suraiya was the last of the singing stars with whom Saigal acted. Before her, there was Khurshid and Kanan Devi. Even as Saigal reigned supreme at Ranjit Movietone in Bombay, there emerged in Lahore a new singing star called Noorjehan. Each one of these singing stars had her pull, each was a queen in her own right. But Saigal was king. How ironic that the Kishore Kumar generation cannot understand Saigal when Kishore himself revered

the singer. How relevant really today is that voice which could scale eight octaves so effortlessly ? Did Saigal not die at just the right time for his vocals to endure forever ? For the era of the sing- ing star was seen to be drawing to an end, as India broke free in August 1947. Saigal did not live to see, at Filmistan , music director C.Ramchandra sack Ashok Kumar as a singing star, bring- ing Mohammed Rafi in as Ashok Kumar's playback for the "Hum ko tumhara aasra" duet with Lalita Dewoolkar-Phadke in `Saajan' Of course, Ashok Kumar was an apology for a singing star compared to Saigal. But had K L Saigal lived on, the singing star may have lived on for just a while longer. For Saigal was now `Devdas', now `Surdas', now `Tansen'. Kundan Lal Saigal remains an ageless performer five decades after he put over what turned out to be his swan song: "Toot gaye sub sapnein mere, ye do naina saawan bhaadon, barse saanjh sabere". From `Parwana' memory Suraiya records: "Saigal saheb's range was nothing short of phenomenal. I wonder whether even Lata Mangesh- kar, whom I wanted as my playback at one stage, could have stood up to this singing giant, so where was there any question of my venturing to put over a duet with him ?"

RMIM Archive Article "245".

K. L. Saigal: "Fifty Years Later, Saigal Lives On"

Posted by: ADhareshwar@worldbank.org (Ashok[44])

Author: Susheela Misra

Here is a recent homage to Saigal on the eve of the 50th anniver- sary of his death. It is available at http://www.webpage.com/hindu/daily/970131/09/09310708.htm Thanks to Sreenivas Paruchuri for brining it to my notice. The article gives Saigal's filmography at the end. I have added some films from the BFI Encyclopaedia entry on Saigal. Do note the year of Saigal's death as given in the article! Ashok ---------- Fifty year later, Saigal lives on The Hindu Kundan Lal Saigal's music-soaked voice had that rare quality that would tug at the listener's heart-strings. On his 50th death anniversary tomorrow (January 18), Susheela Misra pays a tribute to this legendary actor-singer.... Today's youngsters are in the grip of "Michael Jackson" hysteria. What a world of difference from our younger years when all of us as college students were ardent Saigal fans! There was no hys- teria, but what lengths we went to, in order to see a New Thea- tres Films featuring Kundan Lal Saigal, Pahadi Sanyal, Kanan Devi, Pankaj Mullick, P. C. Barua, K. C. Dey and others, and to hear Saigal's songs! He was one of the earliest film-singers to win popularity all-India and a large fan-following in the South. In Kerala, we often travelled nearly 80 km. by trains or car from Ernakulam to Trichur where a certain theatre used to present those unforgettable New Theatres Films occasionally! "Pooran Bhagat", "Dhoop Chhaun", "Devdas", Chandidas", "President", "Street Singer Vidyapati" and many other films are still fresh in our memories _ especially those with Saigal's hauntingly sweet songs. Fascinated by his music under the batons of Raichand Boral and Pankaj Mullick we would see each film more than once. Obviosuly we were not the only ones. Much later I read somewhere that no less a music director than S. D. Burman went to see "Pooran Bhagat" scores of times, attracted by Saigal's soulful renderings of some songs in that film. Music directors like Raichand Boral and Punkaj Mullick used to go into ecstatic praise of the matchless golden voice of Saigal and the feelings he poured into each song, so that his renderings touched the hearts of his listeners deeply. Even classical maestros like Ustads Faiyaz Khan and Abdul Karim Khan appreciated the soulful and natural emotive quality of his songs. Among today's singers also Saigal has great admirers like Talat Mahmud and Lata Mangeshkar. Mukesh, for one, came into limelight (though under an assumed name) by singing a song in Darbari ("Dil jalta hai.." in the film "Pehli Nazar") which was moulded in the style of Saigal! C. H. Atma basked in popularity for a brief while just because his voice-quality was similar to Saigal's! Going back to our college years, we used to buy all available records of Saigal, try to learn as many of his songs as possible, and when someone rendered some of those songs at college func- tions in Madras (Presidency College, and Queen Mary's), how thrilled one used to feel at the resounding encores! Thus, Saigal played an important role in popularising Hindi film-songs in the South. For us of the senior generation. Saigal's songs still stir up hordes of nostalgic memories, and a longing to see those New Theatres Films with meaningful themes, subdued acting, and haunting music. Many of today's youngsters whose tastes have been moulded by those modern films with bizarre stories, ear-splitting and hybrid tunes, and often obscene un-Indian dances, find our tastes rather queer. "What is so special about Saigal's songs?" they ask with a tinge of contempt. How can one explain to them the effect of his songs on all stratas of society _ songs that could sadden and soothe the aching souls of listeners through the emotional inten- sity of his renderings. We felt grateful to those great music directors such as Boral and Pankaj Mullick and to B. N. Sircar the famous owner of New Theatres, who instantaneously detected the gold in the melodious renderings of this ordinary- looking person who is said to have started his career as an agent for Remington typewriters! With neither social position nor years of regular musical "taleem", nor any training in acting, and not even the handsome look expected from a hero, but with a gifted voice that rose

44Source: The Hindu

above all these handicaps, he rose to the top both as an actor and as a singer, and achieved meteoric fame and popularity. One is reminded of poet Browning's great lines: " Talk not of genius baffled,

Genius is master of man,

Genius does what it must,

Talent does what it can". The famous R. C. Boral under whose baton Saigal sang so many of those unforgettable songs and B. N. Sircar who discovered him, used to say with great feeling what a superb and natural actor Saigal used to be, and how he used to touch the hearts of his listeners deeply with his songs. Before Saigal joined New Thea- tres, All India Radio, Calcutta had already discovered him. Actu- ally it was Punkaj Mullick who discovered him for AIR. In 1931 when he first met Saigal and heard him, some magnetic quality in his voice impressed Mullick so much that he at once arranged for his audition with Calcutta, AIR. Saigal's ghazals with his own harmonium accompaniment had the same effect on the then Station Director Mr. Mazumdar who scheduled his broadcast for the same night and made him a regular broadcaster! Another fact that surprised everyone was his versatility. Not only were his songs tuned in numerous raga-raginis but he also sang them in Khayal ("Jhulana jhulao"), Thumri ("Babul mora" or "Kaahe guman karo ri gori"), bhajans ("Suno suno he krishna kaala" or "Din neeke beete jaate hain") and any number of ghazals in the typical Saigal style. When Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore heard him sing some Bengali songs he is said to have allowed him to record many of his (the poet's) own songs. Saigal acted and sang in several Bengali films and some of them like "Jeeban Maran" and "Saathi" are still remembered. His non- filmi songs _ mostly ghazals _ add up to quite a sizable number of records. The sad and romantic contents and the soulful manner of rendering ghazals suited his vocalism immensely, and among the poets whose ghazals he sang effectively were those of Ghalib, Arzoo, Hazrat Mohani, Zauk, Amir Minai and others. Whether he sang film-songs in purely classical ragas like Yaman ("Mai kya jaanoo kya jadu hain" or "Do naina matwale"), or Shankara ("Rum jhum rum jhum"), Bahar ("Baag lagaa do sajani"), Darbari ("Nain heen ko raah dikha prabhu"), Bagesri ("Chaah bar- baad karegi hamhen maalum na thha") and so on _ or in favourite light-classical (Thumri) ragas like Kafi ("Balam aye baso more man me") or Pilu ("Kaahe gumaan kare gori") or in rarer ragas like Madhuvanti "Ibne Mariam huwa kare koyi") or Miyan ki Sarang ("Raina gayi ab huwa savera") _ their appeal was always the same, at once deeply moving and sweetly saddening. Our sweetest songs are those that express saddest feelings. There were two ragas that acquired special appeals in Saigal's voice. That must have been the reason why so may of his film and non-film songs were based on these two widely loved-ragas _ Desh and Bhairavi. A few examples of these will prove the point. "Dukh ke ab din beetat naahi", "Hat gayi lo kaali ghata" (Lagan) and "Kadam chale aage" are some of his all-time favourites in Desh. "Babul mora" (Street Singer); "Aayi hai thu tho" (Kurukshetra); "E kaatibe taqdeer mujhe" (My Sister); "Madhukar Shyam hamaare chor" (Surdas); "jab dil hi toot gaya" (Shahjahan) and so on are some of the memorable numbers in Bhairavi. Millions wept when they saw and heard Saigal sing those evergeen numbers "Soja Rajkumari soja", "Tarpat beete din rain" and " Dukh ke din" and above all, that unsurpassed rendering of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah's last parting song from Lucknow _ "Babul mora naihar chhooto in jaay". This writer has heard innumerable renderings of this famous Thumri in Bhairavi by some great maestros and songs- tresses. But nothing makes Saigal's poignant rendering of it fade from memory. When Saigal was still in our midst, an oft-discussed question was as to what sort of musician he would have shaped into, if he had been trained for years in classical music?. Anti-classicists argued that classical training would have taken away the sweet, saddening quality of Saigal's music. Others feel that perhaps he might have become a classical singer with a lot of expressiveness in his gifted voice. His versatility lay not only in the varieties of ragas and types of songs that he has rendered, but also in the fact that he successfully sang songs in Hindi, Ben- gali, Punjabi and Persian! His rendering of the famous Thumri associated with Ustad Abdul Karim Khan _ "Piya bin nahi aavat chain" in "Devdas" in 1935 _ is said to have won the praise of the Ustad himself who admired the deep pain of the separated lover that Saigal had filled it with. Among Saigal's contemporaries there were a few carping

critics who tried to prejudice film-goers against him by drawing more attention to his lack of handsome looks expected from a hero, and about his weakness for "the bottle", rather than to his captivat- ing voice and subdued acting talents. B. N. Sircar was really the discerning director who discovered the artistic potentials of this simple young man from Jalandhar. Saigal's phenomenal rise both as an actor and as a singer justified Sircar's shrewd choice. A Saigal film was always a guarantee for some unforgett- able songs, and for restrained and dignified acting. One hardly remembers any film songs prior to his entry into films. It was he who turned those songs into "a simple emotional poetry of the soul.." He came into limelight as the bard who echoed the long- ings and inexplicable sadness of the human heart, "the still sad voice of humanity". What could have been the secret sorrow which he always tried to drown in those "bottles" which hastened his premature end so tragically on January 18, 1947. The artiste, alas, is no more with us, but his music through gramophone records and rare revivals of his films, keeps stirring up many nostalgic musical memories of the past in many of us. List of Saigal's films 1932: "Subah ka sitara", "Mohabbat ke aansoo", "Zinda lash" 1933: "Puran Bhakt", "Rajrani Meera", "Yahudi ki ladki", "Dulari Bibi" 1934: "Chandidas", "Rooplekha", "Daku Mansur", "Mohabbat Ki Kasauti" 1935: "Dhoop chhaun", "Karwan-E-Hayat", "Devdas", "Bijoya" 1936: "Crorepati", "Poojarin" 1937: "Didi / President" 1938: "Desher Mati / Dhartimata", "Street Singer / Saathi" 1939: "Dushman / Jiban Maran" 1940: "Zindagi" 1941: "Parichay / Lagan" 1942: "Bhakta Surdas" 1943: "Tansen" 1944: "Meri Bahen", "Bhanwra" 1945: "Tadbeer", "Kurukshetra" 1946: "Omar Khayyam", "Shahzada" His last films were "Parwana" and "Shahjahan".

RMIM Archive Article "18".

Meet Lata Mangeshkar - an Interview

Posted by: apn@cs.buffalo.edu (Ajay P Nerurkar[45])

Author: Gangadhar Gadgil.

To me and, I believe, to every Indian, Lata Mangeshkar is not so much a person as a voice - a voice that soars high and casts a magic spell over the hearts of millions of Indians from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari. It is a voice that is ageless, pure, vibrantly alive, untramelled in its range and flexibility, haunt- ingly expressive and enchanting in its sweetness. Above all, it has a certain ethereal quality, an indefinable something, with a unique appeal for us Indians. It would have been in a sense appropriate if a voice such as Lata's had sung exclusively the ecstatic bhajans of Mirabai. For these bhajans, apart from their poetic excellence and haunting melody, are an expression of total surrender to God. They are a quest which can only be expressed by a voice such as Lata's. But Lata's voice, which really belongs to a temple or an ashram, has been in the service of film music for full twenty-five years now. Film music is inevitably attuned to the requirements of box-office and box-office seems to require that film music should have catchy rhythms, swinging, sugary tunes, polyphonous and loud orchestral accompaniment and an abundance of sentimentality. It is at least apparently incongruous that Lata should have al- most exclusively devoted herself to singing songs for films. It is not a little unusual that, in her case, musical excellence has attained with the utmost ease a hypnotic popularity. And it is certainly unprecedented that in the world of films, where fashions change every couple of years, Lata should have reigned supreme as the best and the most popular singer for an uninter- rupted span of twenty-five years. Lata Mangeshkar is thus a unique musical phenomenon-a phenomenon that not only arouses one's curiosity but also makes one feel grateful. The gratefulness is felt because, in the confused and corrupted world of film music, she keeps alive something that is pure, essentially musical and uniquely Indian.

****

I had always wanted to meet Lata and the fact that she was com- pleting her silver jubilee as a singer provided an ideal occa- sion for doing so. I had expected her to be rather inaccessible and reluctant. Actually, she was quite co-operative. I started the conversation with a reference to the landmark in her career: "You will soon complete twenty-five years of an eventful musical career. What are your feelings on this occasion ? It is obvious that you must be experiencing a deep sense of fulfilment. But do you also have any regrets, a sense of oppor- tunities missed and lost for ever ?" Lata shook her head, rejecting, as it were, my question. Her ex- pression acquired a certain severity and became devout. She said: "I have no sense of fulfilment and no regrets. The only feeling I have is one of deep gratitude to God for his infinite kindness." I looked at her closely to find out if there was any false note in what she said. I found none. Her words seemed to spring from her heart. In any case, I was not surprised by her devoutness. Lata hails from Goa and she has inherited the devoutness that has been nurtured in that soil by Hindus for centuries. It has become an essential part of her personality and music. And, if we decide to leave God out of the picture, Lata`s musical talent is a lega- cy left to his children by her father, the late Master Dinanath, a well-known singer and actor on the Marathi stage. Ironically, he died pennyless. Naturally, I asked Lata about the influence of her father on her music in her early years. "He died when we were all very young. I, the eldest of his chil- dren, was barely twelve at the time. But I remember him distinct- ly. He was always so full of music that we all naturally got in- terested in it. He also taught me music, although only for a lit- tle while." "I hardly ever heard him on the the stage though," she continued, in a reminiscent mood. "He was orthodox in his ideas. He would not let us, his daughters, watch a play, and he was absolutely opposed to the

45Source: Illustrated Weekly of India (1967)

idea of my acting in one. He was terribly annoyed when I once acted in a play behind his back. He did not mind our learning music, though. In fact, he encouraged it." "Were there any other musical influences in your formative years ?" "Yes. I listened to music whenever I could. But it was not really the external influences that made me a singer. Music was in me. I was full of it. Tunes floated through my mind endlessly, and I used to hum them all the time, even when having my meals. I remember that, once at school, I even counted things in terms of the notes in the musical scale! And I had an amazing memory as well as a capacity for musical imitation. I could remember tunes heard years ago and reproduce them exactly." "It must have been wonderful to be so full of music. Are you full of it even now ?" "Yes, I suppose so. I think up tunes and hum them all the time." "But didn't you have any regular musical training at all ?" "Oh, yes, I had. And it was rigorous training in classical music. I was first taught by my father. Later on, in 1945, I became the student of Amanali Bhendibazarwale. It was the late Master Vinayak the famous film director and producer, who insisted on my having the training and offered to pay two hundred rupees a month for it. It was a very kind offer, but I was too proud to accept it. In later years, I got training from Amanatali Devaswale. I wish I had had more of it. But I soon won recognition as a play- back singer in our films and I had to devote all my time to this demanding and fascinating career." "Do you think that this training in classical music has proved useful to you in becoming a successful playback singer ?" "Certainly. The training has made it easy for me to understand and execute what a music director wants. It has given my voice a consistency and flexibility which singers of film songs often lack. I also think that the training has helped my voice retain its musical qualities all these years. Voices of playback singers do not generally last that long." " I am sure", I said, "that the training in classical music has done you a lot of good. Yet classical music and film music are two quite different things, and a musician who excels in classi- cal music can prove a flop in the world of film music." "Oh, yes, the two are quite different. Film music requires a voice that has a certain delicacy and a capacity to express emo- tion in all its richness and variety. Long sessions of rigorous training in the classical style can deprive a voice of these qualities. I have to be very careful to avoid overexerting my voice. And that is one of the reasons why I cannot train myself in the classical style, although I would love to do so." "In a way, to sing film songs appears very easy. Almost anybody with a pleasant voice can sing a film song effectively. Yet very few manage to succeed as singers in film music. How do you ac- count for it ?", I asked. "One has to have and develop a number of qualities in order to succeed as a singer in films. A film song is sung to express a mood...an emotion. The singer must have the ability to grasp the mood and express it through music. Unlike in classical music, words matter a great deal in film music. The singer has to pro- nounce them with clarity and in a manner that brings out all the emotion they carry. The singer also needs a correct understanding of what a mike does to one's voice. And, above all, the voice has to be trained to do a lot of things with ease and grace and a compelling appeal." I then asked her about her early years and the struggle that she had to go through to establish herself as a playback singer. "Those were hard times", she said. "We were very poor and desperately in need of money. I had, therefore, to work without respite. I remember occasions when I worked without food and sleep for two days and more. And then there were prejudices to be overcome. It used to be said disparagingly in those days that songs sung by Maharashtrians smelt of dal and rice! I had to disprove it and cultivate a fine Hindustani accent as well. There was so much else to learn, too, and I had to do it mostly by my- self." "But didn't you have any model before you ? Didn't you, at any time, say to yourself that you would like to sing like somebody - like say, Saigal ?" I thought of Saigal because I had observed a certain affinity between that great and popular singer of film songs and Lata. "Yes, of course. I loved Saigal's wonderful songs. The songs had no frills. There was no attempt to display musical virtuosity. He used to sing them simply, from the bottom of his heart. That is what I wanted to do. That is what I tried to learn from him. That is what I have been striving to do all along ", she said, with a certain passionate urgency. "And have you done it ?" I asked. "God has been very kind", was all she said. "Any singer who casts such a tremendous spell on the people must have something more than a sweet voice and a capacity to express emotion through her music. She must somehow touch the very soul of a people. Their deepest yearnings, the very core of their be- ing, has to find expression in that singer's songs to a degree. Saigal did this and so have you. " She was silent. "There is a

difference between the two of you, though", I contin- ued. "Saigal always sounded like an angel that had fallen. His was a flawed spirituality; and, because it was flawed, it had a special appeal. Your voice expresses something pure, unblemished and yet lonely and sad. In any case, the songs of both of you move people deeply." "I remember an occasion when I was in Calcutta", she responded. "An old man saw me and suddenly rushed forward and fell at my feet. He was not an illiterate man, he seemed to belong to the educated middle class. I was so moved by what he did that I started crying. I cried all the way home, and I cried for a long time afterwards", Lata laughed, deprecatingly, as if to suggest that it was rather silly of her to have been so deeply moved. But this evidence of her being an emotional person was rather in- teresting. For she had looked quite self-possessed and business- like in everything she had said and done. Infact, she had to seemed to me rather an unemotional person, although her songs re- veal a rare capacity to feel deeply and express emotions with compelling power. I asked : "You have been in the world of film music for the last twenty-five years. What are the changes in popular taste that you have noticed ? Has it changed for the better of for the worse ?" "There has been a considerable change in musical taste and it has not all been for the better. I would not really blame the people for the vulgarisation of taste. It is the music directors who are responsible for it. They are the makers of popular taste." She wanted to say more but didn't, obviously not wanting to hurt anybody." "Do you think that the influence of Western music on our film music has been healthy ?" "I would not say that such an influence is inherently bad. There has always been a lot of give and take in the world of music. Our classical music itself is a blend of many influences; and the Western Pop singers have borrowed a great deal from Africa and elsewhere. I do not, therefore, mind it if our music absorbs foreign influences. What I do mind is indiscriminate borrowing which creates the kind of hybrid, hotchpotch music we have to- day." "Can't something be done about it ?" "Oh, yes, something can be done, and efforts have been made in that direction. But it is so difficult to change things in the film industry. There is a sort of formula of success; and nobody wants to violate it. So things go on in a groove." She paused a little and then continued : "A film song must be ap-propriate to the situation in which it is sung. It must express the mood, the interplay of emotion, the element of drama that is inherent in that situation. The words and the tune have to be apt. The orchestral accompaniment must heighten the effect of the song and it must fit in with the locale and the situation. But we don't seem to bother about it. There is a slavery of latest fashions and trends." I smiled and said : "In any case, I do hope that something is done to minimise or cut out altogether those noisy and jarring orchestral interludes that interrupt every film song at every step." She agreed with a smile : "I would like to elaborate the musical theme myself rather than leave it to the orchestra." She added, more seriously : "There was a generation of music directors that used to worry about the appropriateness and unity of their musi- cal compositions, and I am really grateful to men like Ghulam Haider, Shyamsunder, Khemchand Prakash, Naushad and Salil Chowdhury for the music they composed for me to sing. But those who succeeded them have not worried about the basic things. They are very talented men who have introduced a number of innova- tions. But they seem to be overlooking something very essential." "That brings me", I said, "to a very basic point. Film music is light music and I do not expect from it the kind of satisfaction and joy that one derives from classical music. But I do expect that film music should give pleasure, even to a man with a cul- tivated musical taste. This does not generally happen, although there are bits and pieces of film songs that are really nice. Can anything be done to change this state of affairs ?" "That is not impossible," said Lata, emphatically. "A great deal can be done." "Are you trying to do it yourself ?" She smiled and said : "I will not say anything about it now." "What are your plans for the future ?" I asked. "No plans in particular. I will carry on with my work. But I do hope that I will be able to devote more time to classical music. I love to listen to it. I am a great admirer of musicians like Bhimsen Joshi, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Amir Khan. Pt. Omkarnath and D.V.Paluskar, who died an untimely death. I want to sing classi- cal music one of these days, if I can."

RMIM Archive Article "36".

Lata and Guiness Record?

Posted by: Preetham Gopalaswamy[46] (preetham@src.umd.edu) .

==========

The following article is incontrovertible proof of 2 related yet different issues

1] Lata could not have sung 25000 songs in her career (and most certainly not by the time that the Guiness Book Records included it in its edition).

2] Lata was overtaken by Asha in the number of songs sung by each of them (and Rafi was nowhere in the reckoning) as early as the 70s.

Furthermore, after reading this article, Lata herself acknowledged the fact to the author that the stories of her having sung 25000 songs were most probably exaggerated.

==========

In his article, parrikar@spot.Colorado.EDU (Rajan Purshottam Parrikar) writes:

:This is what is said in 1982 Guinness Book of World Records:

: Miss Lata Mangeshkar (b 1928) has reportedly recorded between
: 1948 and 1974 not less than 25,000 solo, duet and chorus backed
: songs in 20 Indian languages. She frequently has 5 sessions in
: a day and has "backed" 1,800 films to 1974.

: Mohamad Rafi (d May 1, 1980) claimed to have recorded 28,000
: songs in 11 Indian languages between 1944 and April 1980.

> I can buy the argument that the peak number is an exaggeration. But
> the assertion that Asha has more songs than Lata is a bitter pill to
> swallow. This is handwaving, Janaab. Put your balls on the table
> and then we'll talk; i.e., let's see the article proving # of Asha
> songs > # of Lata songs.

You wanted the article, you got it. Here are the details that I was referring to. This article was part of a longer article entitled "The Lata Legend" which appeared in FILMFARE in 1987. It is a wonderful article which lovingly describes the woman behind the voice, her likes, her dislikes, her views; it also traces her career and the impact that she has had on popular Indian music.

46 Sources: Articles from magazines Movie 1983, and Filmfare 1987

The article has several wonderful pictures of Lata and her family. I do not have the time right now to type in the whole thing, and opted to enter just the section relevant to the Guiness controversy. In a separate article by the same author on Asha Bhonsle entitled "Asha Bhonsle : The Voices" (MOVIE, August 1983), there is a small table which compares the number of songs sung by Asha, Rafi and Lata, in the 50s, where Asha leads the rest. I shall append that table to the end of this article. With a little extrapolation and a basic knowledge of the big picture of music in the 60s, one can see that Asha would certainly have surpassed Lata in numbers in the 60s (Nayyar was one of the most popular and prolific composers and Lata did not sing for him; S. D. Burman and Lata did not make music together due to some disputes, not until the film "Guide" which was in the late 60s). By her own admittance, Lata has been in semi-retirement through the late 70s and the 80s (she apparently spends 5 months in a year in London) and the 70s saw the onset of the Disco era which belonged to Asha. So I guess that would be a handwavy way of making Rajan swallow that bitter pill :-) :-) (Note: Subsequently, figures for the 60s and 70s, which were unavailable in 1983 when the Asha article was written, became available. Hence bear the date of the article in mind while reading it).

Here is the article!! Any typos are mine.

Preetham

==========

A CONTROVERSY IN THE MAKING
by Punita Bhatt

(Source: Filmfare June 1-15, 1987)

==========

The following figures of Hindi film songs sung by Lata Mangeshkar are derived from the only authoritative work in the field, Har Mandir Singh's "ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF HINDI FILM SONGS", so far available in three volumes, 1941-50, 1951-60 and 1961-70. This very scholarly work limits itself to songs from Hindi films only; therefore, these figures DO NOT INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: Lata's songs from the various regional films, non-film songs, and songs from films that remained incomplete or unreleased.

THE FORTIES			THE FIFTIES			THE SIXTIES		
			1951	:	218	1961	:	153
			1952	:	171	1962	:	128
			1953	:	189	1963	:	107
			1954	:	166	1964	:	133
1945	:	1	1955	:	209	1965	:	90

1946	:	6	1956	:	200	1966	:	129
1947	:	5	1957	:	135	1967	:	106
1948	:	48	1958	:	127	1968	:	80
1949	:	151	1959	:	193	1969	:	95
1950	:	152	1960	:	158	1970	:	122
		----			----			----
TOTAL	:	363			1766			1143
		----			----			----

TOTAL FROM 1945-1970: 3272 SONGS

It all seems to have started with an article published in the March 12, 1971 issue of FILMFARE, in which Raju Bharatan observed quite casually that Lata's voice had enhanced "the tonal appeal of some 16,000 songs in a variety of languages". There was no indication of how he came upon this figure. The 16,000 jumped to 25,000 by the time the item reached the Guiness Book of World Records, and the period was said to be 1948-1971.

By the end of the seventies, it was said to be 30,000 songs. Since then the figure has hop-skipped-and-jumped every few years, erratically, irresponsibly and always without documentation. The last I heard was an article claiming 50,000 songs on Lata's behalf. All this when she has been semi retirement for almost a decade now.

Where are these figures coming from ? No one seems to know the source or has any concrete information to support the claims. It seems to me that once this whole thing started, it has taken on a life of its own, snowballing into increasingly ridiculous claims. To some extent it may even have become a convenient tool, an on-going game of one-upmanship between journalists - all at the ex-pense of Lata Mangeshkar.

Throughout her life, Lata has refused to get involved in contro-versies, whatever the nature, no matter how bitter and biting their tone. She has often preferred silence over clarification, waiting for stories to die a natural death. And they have, soon-er or later. And she has emerged always, with her reputation un-scathed. On this issue she has stated categorically and with a finality: "I don't know anything about it. I don't know how my name appeared in the Guinness Book or where they got their infor-mation from. Certainly, I didn't supply it. I don't keep a record of the number of songs I've done."

The sad part of all this is that numbers is not what Lata is about. Her greatness as an artiste, her contribution to the world of popular music, her stature as an imposing figure in pub-lic life - none of these derive an iota from any statistics, real

or imagined.

Lata does not need 25,000 or 35,000 songs to be what she is or to retain her position in history, any more than Shakespeare needed 25,000 plays. For Lata Mangeshkar, a "mere" thousand or maybe even just one hundred songs would suffice. It is in the "quality" of her contribution to the film song, the eternal charm and magic of her voice, the dignity and class of her personality - it is in these that she stakes a claim to our hearts and to our minds. To think otherwise is to misunderstand the nature of the love she commands and to denigrate a truly great lady.

I think this terribly fixation on numbers that has infected public life in India is juvenile and hopefully will run its course. Until then it is better to let those who need the figures compete for them, to race for the numbers and be their only claim to fame. Let us leave Lata out of the horse race.

==========

THE FIFTIES -- ASHA BHONSLE'S DECADE

(Source: Movie August 1983)

==========

Year	Asha	Lata	Rafi
1951	58	218	59
1952	69	171	61
1953	125	189	68
1954	220	166	82
1955	281	209	147
1956	280	200	125
1957	196	135	159
1958	281	127	163
1959	197	193	169
1960	185	158	203
Decade Total	1892	1766	1236

NOTE: These figures refer to Hindi film songs ONLY, and do not include regional or non-film music.

From Hindi Film Geet Kosh (Encyclopaedia of Hindi film songs), Volume III, 1951-60 (compiled by Har Mandir Singh "Hamraj", Editor). Figures provided by Mr. A. Rajamamar of Shahabad (Gulbarga). Figures for the sixties and the seventies are not available.

RMIM Archive Article "122".

Lata - How many and with whom?

Posted by: surjit.singh@windmill.com (Surjit Singh[47])

Author: Vishwas Nerurkar (editor)

```
==========================================================================
                    LATA - A Statistical Summary
==========================================================================

The following info comes from the definitive reference book on the
songs sung by Lata in Hindi movies:

"Lata Mangeshkar Gandhar Svaryaatraa 1945-1989" Edited by Vishwas
Nerurkar

A definitive and complete book with lots of rare pictures.  Entries
are in the format:

Song #, beginning of song, film, year, music, lyricist.

There are 5067 entries covering the period 1945-1989. They must have
this info on computer also, because they provide lots of statistical
data. Here are some excerpts; for complete and very detailed info see
the book:

Total = 5067, solos = 3341, male duets = 1434, female duets = 244
others = subtract yourself!

Music Directors (in descending order of number of songs by Lata)
---------------

Laxmi-Pyare             666
Shankar-Jaikishan       453
R. D. Burman            327
Kalyanji Anandji        321  (out of which 24 with Kalyanji Virji Shah
alone)
C. Ramchandra           298
Chitragupt              240
Madan Mohan             210
S. D. Burman            182
Naushad                 155
Roshan                  146
Hemant                  139
Anil Biswas             123
Rajesh Roshan           112
Vasant Desai            112
Salil Chaudhary         108
```

47Source: "Lata Mangeshkar Gandhar Svaryaatraa 1945-1989"

Husnlal-Bhagatram	107	
Khayyam (Sharmaji)	71	
O. P. Nayyar	000	

Lyricists:

Anand Bakshi	679	
Rajendra Krishan	554	
Majrooh	431	
Shailendra	357	(1 with Kaifi Azma)
Hasrat	298	(2 with Ravindra Jain)
Bharat Vyas	206	
Shakeel	204	
Prem Dhawan	198	(1 with Sardar Jafri)
Sahir	160	
Indivar	156	

According to Mr. Har Mandir Singh "Hamraaz", a similar book on Asha Bhonsale by the same people has been published; it was released on April 1, 1995 in Dinanath Mangeshkar Hall, Bombay, in a ceremony in which Dev Anand, Asha Parikh, etc. were present. The book covers the period 1949 to 1994 and has info on the 7595 songs by Asha in Hindi movies. The book costs Rs. 375 and the airmail postage is typically Rs. 250 for a book of this size.

Most of the additional info comes from:

Listener's Bulletin, a monthly, edited by Hamraaz Saahib and published by the Secretary, the Flying Listener's Club, Kanpur.

Surjit Singh, a movie fan period.
dussh@ttacs.ttu.edu
==========

RMIM Archive Article "125".

Lata Mangeshkar and all Music Directors - Statistics

Posted by: surjit.singh@windmill.com (Surjit Singh[48])

```
================================================================
                  Lata Mangeshkar - Music Directors
================================================================
```

The following list reads like the who's who of Hindi movie music directors. The only missing name is that of O. P. Nayyar with whom Lata did not sing even once!

I have rearranged it in the decreasing order of number of songs. Other than that, I have made no changes.

In my opinion, this is the complete and up-to-date info on all the Hindi movie songs, solos, duets, choruses etc. by Lata. This is an improvement over the info in the encycloaedias. Firstly because encycos go only up to 1980, whereas this list goes up to 1989. (The book has a publication date of October 29, 1989, so it does not include all of 1989, however.) Secondly, the third volume (1951-1960) of the encyclopaedia was published in January 1980, and, more info is now available than it was at that time. Mr. Har Mandir Singh "Hamraaz" is preparing the updated revised edition of this volume now. I will post the info when it is available.

Also, in my opinion, Lata is the most admired singer, even though Asha has sung more songs. It follows that the relative number N of songs Lata has sung with any MD (apart from the OPN anamoly!) can serve as a first approximation to the popularity (not necessarily quality) of the particular MD, unless the difference is less than the square root of N, (assuming Gaussian distribution) in which case both could be considered equally popular.

The list has the name of the MD (and his group, if any), the total number of songs with them and the total number of films with them. Apart from the usual songs, the list includes even those songs which were removed from the movie or for which no records were issued or from the movies that were never released. It should be mentioned that the total number of estimated songs in all the Hindi movies from the period 1931-1980 is 44000 and the total number of movies from the same period is believed to be 5664.

MD Group	Songs	Films
Laxmikant Pyarelal	666	271

48 Source: "Lata Mangeshkar Gandhar Svaryaatraa 1945-1989"

Shankar Jaikishan	453	124
R. D. Burman	327	164
C. Ramchandra	298	63
Kalyanji Anandji	297	147
Chitragupt	240	74
Madan Mohan	210	68
S. D. Burman	182	55
Naushad	155	35
Roshan	146	41
Hemant Kumar	139	40
Anil Biswas	123	30
Vasant Desai	112	28
Rajesh Roshan	112	53
Salil Chaudhari	108	37
Husnlal Bhagatram	107	30
Bhappi Lahiri	97	65
Ravi	75	27
Khayyam (Sharmaji)	71	29
Ghulam Mohammad	71	18
S. N. Tripathy	71	24
Usha Khanna	68	36
Hansraj Bahal	43	18
Sudhir Phadake	32	8
Jaiidev	28	15
N. Dutta	28	14
Hridyanath Mangeshkar	26	9
Vinod	26	6
Mohammad Shafi	24	5
Kalyanji Virji Shah	24	6
Ravindra Jain	23	11
Bulo C. Rani	22	8
Pandit Gobind Ram	21	8
Sonik Omi	20	12
Uttam Jagdish	20	6
Duttaram	19	8
Shiv Hari	18	4
Snehal Bhatakar	18	6
Shyam Sundar	17	8
Adi Narayan Rao	17	2
Avinash Vyas	16	7
K. Dutta	15	6
Mannadey	15	6
S. Mohinder	15	4
Khemchandra Prakash	14	3
Sajjad Hussain	14	6
Ganesh	14	6
Ram Lakshaman	13	6
Dilip Dholakiya	13	4
G. S. Kohli	12	7
Shivram Krishan	11	4
Nashad (Shaukat Dehalavi)	11	4

Sardar Malik	10	5
Jamal Sen	10	4
Annu Malik	10	7
B. S. Kalla	10	2
Basu Manohari	9	4
Sardul Kwatra	9	4
Shailesh	8	2
Basant Prakash	8	3
Iqbal Qureshi	8	3
Ghulam Haider	8	3
Bhola Shreshath	7	3
Vijay Singh	7	1
Shaukat Haidari	7	1
Ram Kadam	7	1
Hemant Kedar	7	1
R. C. Boral	7	2
Ravi Shankar	7	2
Manohar	6	1
M. D. Parthasarthi + E. Shankar Shastry + B. S. Kalla	6	1
Ramlal Hirapanna	6	2
Kanu Ghosh	6	3
Sapan Jagmohan	6	4
Shyamji Ghanshyamji	5	3
Lala Asad Sattar	5	2
Ramesh	5	1
Pandit Amarnath	5	1
Bhupen Hazarika	5	3
Hafiz Khan	5	1
B. D. Burman	4	1
Mukesh	4	1
Vedpal	4	2
Vasant + Ramchandra	4	1
Ramlal	4	1
Master Krishanrao	4	1
S. D. Batish	4	3
Amar Utpal	4	2
Dhaniram	4	1
Prem Dhawan	4	3
Aziz Khan	3	1
Shyambabu Pathak	3	2
Nitin Mangesh	3	2
Vasant Prabhu	3	1
A. R. Qureshi	3	1
Datta Davajekar	3	1
Aziz Hindi	3	2
Sanmukh Babu Upadhyaya	3	1
S. K. Pal	3	1
Premnath	3	1
Ramesh Nayadu	3	1

Pardesi	2	1
P. Nageshvar Rao	2	1
P. Ramakant	2	1
Saraswati Devi	2	1
Shambhu Sen	2	1
C. R. Subbaraman	2	1
R. Sudarshanam	2	1
Kamal Mitra	2	1
Ninu Majumdar	2	1
R. Sudarshanam + Dhaniram	2	1
Jagmohan	2	1
Motiram	2	1
Nisar + Chic Chocolate	2	1
Sanmukh Babu	2	1
S.V.Venkataraman+T.R.Ramanathan	2	1
Vedpal Sharma	2	1
Krishan Dayal	2	1
Vishwanathan + Rammurti	2	1
V. Balsara	2	1
Dilip Roy	2	1
Ali Akbar Khan	2	2
Manas Mukherji	2	2
Hemant Bhosale	2	2
Shyamal Mitra	2	2

==========

The following are one movie-one song MD's.

==========

Kishore Kumar
E. Shankar Shastri
Arun Kumar
Anand Milind
S. Bannerji
Karnad + P. Ramakant
Ajit Merchant
S. Purushottam
Mukund Masurekar
Meena Mangeshkar
Ramkrishan Shinde
Raj Ratan
Malaya Chakravarti
Manoj Gyan
Mahesh naresh
Lachhiram
C. Arjun
Sapan Chakravarti
Gyan Dutt
Lala Sattar
Jay Kumar

Shridhar Parsekar
Madhusudan Acharya
Nadeem Shravan
Gulshan Sufi
Govind Naresh
Jugal Kishor Tilakraj
Jeetu Tapan
Shrikant
Jagjit Singh
Chand Pardesi
Ghanshyam
D. M. Tagore
Brij Bhushan
Pamarthi + Ashwatthama
Natraj
Bipin Babul
B. N. Bali
Prabhakar Jog
D. C. Dutt

==========

The total number of MD groups is 165, the number of songs is 5067, and the total number of movies is 1825. Because of the bookkkeeping method adopted by the editor, 10 songs have been attributed to the MD's twice. Also from the book, I can mention that 3341 solos, 1434 duets with males, 244 duets with females and 48 songs with more that one partner, were sung by Lata.

Next time, I will endeavor to type in the same kind of info for the lyricists: the info about male, female and more than one partners will follow after that.

Surjit Singh
==========

RMIM Archive Article "133".

Lata & 239 lyricists of Hindi movie songs

Posted by: dussh@ttacs.ttu.edu (preferred address)

surjit.singh@windmill.com (Surjit Singh[49])

==========

The following is a continuation of my previous post about Lata's songs. Once again, this includes only songs from HINDI MOVIES, other languages are excluded and non-filmi songs are also excluded. This one is about lyricists. I believe that she sang for almost every lyricist who wrote songs for Hindi movies after 1946 or so.

In my opinion, Lata (about 5250 songs up to 1992) is the most admired female singer, even though Asha (about 7500 songs up to 1992) has sung more songs. Clearly the relative number of songs Lata has sung for any lyricist can serve as a first approximation to the popularity (not necessarily quality) of the particular songwriter.

The list has the name of the lyricist (and his collaborator, if any), the total number of songs with them and the total number of films with them. Apart from the usual songs, the list includes even those songs which were removed from the movie or for which no records were issued or from the movies that were never released. It should be mentioned that the total number of estimated songs in all the Hindi movies from the period 1931-1992 is 50000 and the total number of Hindi movies from the same period is believed to be about 7000.

Once again, this is straight from the book, no editing has been done by me, except to correct obvious misspellings.

Note: To make the pronunciation easy, I have used the excellent transliteration scheme of Avinash Chopde, mostly. I think that it should be adopted universally.

Lyricists	songs	movies
aana.nd baKshii	679	309
raajendra krishaN	554	158
majarooh	431	165
shailendra	356	127
hasarat	296	135
bharat vyaas	206	67

49Source: "Lata Mangeshkar Gandhar Svaryaatraa 1945-1989"

shakiil badaayuu.Nnii	204	51
prem dhavan	197	78
saahir	160	58
indiivar	156	111
P. L. sa.ntoshii	78	22
qamar jalaalaabaadii	74	33
anjaan	69	52
raajaa mehadii alii Ka.N	66	30
asad bhopaalii	65	34
varmaa malik	60	40
gulazaar	55	29
panDit narendra sharmaa	55	17
pradiip	52	18
kaifii aazamii	48	26
gulashan baavaraa	46	31
jaa.N nisaar aKtar	39	18
S. H. bihaarii	37	16
yogesh	37	25
Kumaar baaraaba.nkavi	33	9
naqsh laayalapurii	30	22
D. N. madhok	26	8
gopaal si.Nha nepaalii	26	9
sarashaar sailaanii	22	9
faaruuq qaisar	21	14
mulkaraaj bhaakha.Dii	21	6
amit khannaa	20	11
kaif irafaanii	20	16
kedaar sharmaa	20	7
sa.ntosh aana.nd	20	10
tanveer naqavii	20	8
nuur lakhanavii	19	4
panDit indra	19	4
nidaa faazalii	18	14
gauhar kaanapurii	17	8
naqshab jaarachavii	17	8
ravindra jain	17	9
neeraj	16	7
aziiz kashmiirii	15	5
maayaa govind	15	9
vishveshvar sharmaa	14	7
B. D. mishraa	13	5
panDit B. C. madhur	13	4
jaaved aKtar	12	5
ehasaan rizavii	11	5
kulva.nt jaanii	11	7
ravi	11	6

saavan kumaar	11	4
sarasvatii kumaar diipak	11	8
viTThalbhaaii paTel	11	10
M. G. hashmat	10	8
iishvar chandra kapuur	10	4
naazim paaniipatii	10	3
shevan rizavii	10	4
traditional and classical	10	9
manoj kumaar	9	3
kaif bhopaalii	8	3
raammuurtii chaturvedii	8	3
shailii shailendra	8	4
uddhav kumaar	8	7
ziyaa sarahadii	8	3
anjum jaipurii	7	4
deevaan sharar	7	4
satyendra atthaiyaa	7	5
banavaasi	6	2
ra.ngiin	6	3
samiir	6	5
L. meghaanii	5	1
aKtar romaanii	5	4
aadil & uddhav duo	5	1
dev kohalii	5	2
habiib sarhadii	5	1
indrajiit si.Nha tulasii	5	5
miiraabaaii	5	3
nyaay sharmaa	5	2
paravez shamsii	5	1
shaharayaar	5	1
shiv kumaar	5	1
vaahid quraishii	5	3
viirendra mishraa	5	2
vishvaamitraa aadil	5	3
A. aah shikaarpurii	4	3
Dr. safadar aah	4	3
Kaavar zamaa.N	4	2
aarazuu lakhanavii	4	2
aish kanwal	4	2
brajendra gau.D	4	2
chandrashekhar paandey	4	3
madan	4	2
mahipaal	4	2
ravindra piipaT	4	2
sarataaj	4	1
valii saahib	4	3
vasa.nt dev	4	2

K. L. paradesii	3	2
aKtar yuusuf	3	1
aKtar-ul-imaan	3	1
anjum piiliibhiitii	3	2
arjun	3	1
bahazaad lakhanavii	3	2
bashar navaaz	3	1
hasan kamaal	3	3
kafiil ajar	3	2
keshav	3	2
panDit faanii	3	2
panDit sudarshan	3	2
shakiil nuumaanii	3	1
shamiim jaipurii	3	3
shams aziimaabaadii	3	2
Dr. hariiraam aachaaryaa	2	1
G. L. raaval	2	2
S. P. kallaa	2	1
aabid gularej	2	1
aalam syaahaposh	2	1
amiir Kusaro	2	2
arjun dev "ashq"	2	1
arshii ajamerii	2	1
baalakavii bairaagii	2	1
gaafil haranaalavii	2	2
haragovind	2	1
hasrat & ravindra jain	2	1
jaaved anvar	2	1
jalaal maliihaabaadii	2	2
kamaal amarohii	2	1
madhuraaj	2	1
mahendra praaN	2	1
mulkaraaj	2	1
padmaa sachadev	2	1
panDit nira.njan sharmaa	2	1
panDit raamamurtii	2	1
prahlaad sharmaa	2	1
prayaag raaj	2	2
prem baarabaTanii	2	2
raNdhiir	2	1
raaj baladev raaj	2	1
raajesh roshan	2	1
ravindra raaval	2	2
saGiir usmaanii	2	1
saradaar pa.nchhii	2	1
shaadaab	2	2

shambhuu sen 2 1

The following are one movie-one song "combos" as saamii bhaaii would say. They just wrote one song for one movie that Lata sang.

A. qariim	Dr. iqabaal	Dr. raahii maasuum razaa
F. M. qaisar	G. D. maaDagulakar	
S. R. chopraa saaz	ravi sha.nkar sharmaa	
afzal shaadaab	amar ansaarii	amiir Miinaaii
amiir kaajalabaaz	amritaa priitam	anjaan & kapuur
anvar saaGar	asad bhopaalii & jafar gorakhapurii	
avinaash vyaas	B. K. purii	B. R. sharma
ba.nkimchandra chaTarjii		baalakrishaN
buuTaaraam sharmaa	daaG	darabaarilaal shamiim
dayaanaath pande	dvaarkaanaath	fiiroz
fiiroz jaala.ndharii	gulaabacha.nd	gulashan jalaalaabaadii
harshh	haruN	hasarat lakhanavii
huddaa	kaamil rashiid	kaanu ghosh
keshariinaath vaidya	keshav trivedii	kumud tripaaThii
lekharaaj bhaakha.Dii	maKaduum mahiyudiin	madahosh bilgraamii
madhukar raajasthaanii	mahendra dehalavi	manamohan saabir
manohar khanna	mashahar	miir aniis
miir takii miir	motii B. A.	muniir aarazuu kaazamii
munshii farog	munsif	mushtaar haidarii
na.ndii khanna	naTraaj	nigaar
nizaam	panDit mukharaam sharmaa	
parataav lakhanavii	prabhaa Thaakur	prakaash
prakaash baKshii	prakaash meharaa	prakaash pa.nkaj
prem dhavan & saradaar jaafarii		prem saara.ng
qamar jalaalaabaadii & manoj kumaar		qatiil shifaaii
raajakavii tulasii	raam pa.njavaanii	raghupat raay
ramesh pa.nt	ramesh shastrii	ruupabaanii
saaGar nizaamii	saahir bhopaalii	sabaa afagaanii
salaauddiin paravez	saradaar jaafarii	saravar
shailendra & kaifii aazamii		shekhar
shriiraam boharaa	shyaam hindii	shyaam laal
shyamalaal shams	si.nghaar	sika.ndar bhaaratii
som Thaakur	V. N. ma.ngal	viir muhammad purii
vinod kapuur	yuusuf	

Next time, I will endeavor to type in the same kind of info for about Lata's male singing partners in Hindi movies.

****

A comparison with Mukesh:

For comparison purposes it may be noted that all the songs ever sung by Mukesh, during the period 1941-1982, in movies of all languages and including non-movie records like bhajans, ghazals etc. is 994. A compilation of the FULL TEXT of each of the 992 songs (info about 2 bangla songs was obtained after the publica-

tion of the book) and all the relevant info about the song, like the movie, year, MD, lyricists and co-singers, if any, was published by Mr. Harish Raghuwanshi of Surat, Gujarat in a 684-page book called "Mukesh Geet Kosh" in 1985. The book is out of print now, but Mr. Raghuvanshi is working on the second edition. He has recently published an authoritative and comprehensive 412 page encyclopaedia of 599 Gujarati movies (1932-1994). He can be reached at:

Mr. Harish Raghuwanshi
Vision House
Sagrampura,
Near Putli
SURAT - 395 002
Gujarat

****

One final note: Many of you have written saying that I have done a job that is herculean, monumental, heroic, marathon etc. Please remember that the compilers have put in much greater effort working for many many years, going to the Poona archives, HMV archives in Bombay and Calcutta, the famous booklet shop of Mr. Hussainibhai Bookletwalla of Grant Road, Bombay, private record collections, cine artists and what not. In comparison with all that, I remain, sirs and madams, only your humble typist:

Surjit Singh, a movie fan, period.

RMIM Archive Article "141".

Lata & 93 male singers of Hindi movie songs

Posted by: dussh@ttacs.ttu.edu (Surjit Singh[50])

surjit.singh@windmill.com (Surjit Singh)

```
---------------------------------------------------------------
            Lata & 93 male singers of Hindi movie songs
---------------------------------------------------------------
```

The following is a continuation of my previous three posts about Lata's songs, which were: a statistical summary, Lata with various music directors and lyricists.

Again, this includes only songs from HINDI MOVIES, other languages are excluded and non-filmi songs are also excluded. This one is about her male singing partners. Interestingly, even people who are not professional singers, (like suniil dutt, for example) but said or sang a word or two are included, presumably because their names are mentioned on the record. I believe that she sang for almost every male singer who sang for Hindi movies after 1946 or so. For more info, please read the earlier posts.

The list is arranged in the following way. There is the name of the male singer, total number of songs with him, total number of movies in which Lata sang with him, total number of duets (in which only Lata and this male is featured), the total number of songs with this male and other people (it implies a triplet or a chorus).

Note: To make the pronunciation easy, I have adhered to the excellent transliteration scheme of Avinash Chopde, a scheme which should be universally adopted.

NAME	TOTAL	MOVIES	DUETS	OTHERS
mohd. rafii	440	315	426	14
kishor kumaar	327	248	321	6
mukesh	161	124	158	3
mannaaDe	107	93	97	10
mahendra kapuur	77	60	73	4
talat mehmuud	65	53	64	1
hemant kumaar	52	43	48	4
chitalakar	50	26	47	3
suresh vaaDakar	29	24	29	0
shabbiir kumaar	21	15	21	0

50Source: "Lata Mangeshkar Gandhar Svaryaatraa 1945-1989"

amit kumaar	18	12	17	1
nitiin mukesh	14	10	14	0
shailendra si.nh	13	8	12	1
s. p. baalaasubramaNyam	12	7	11	1
g. m. durraanii	11	10	11	0
yesuudaas	10	8	10	0
muhammad aziiz	10	8	10	0
bhuupendra	10	9	9	1
bhappii laahi.Dii	5	5	5	0
subiir sen	4	4	4	0
shamindar	4	2	4	0
s. d. baatish	4	3	3	1
mehamuud	4	4	4	0
manamohan si.nh	4	3	4	0
manahar udhaas	4	4	4	0
dvijen mukherjii	4	4	4	0
anil bisvaas	4	2	2	2
sudhiir pha.Dake	3	3	3	0
r. d. burman	3	3	3	0
anvar	3	3	3	0
vishaal gosvaamii	2	1	2	0
trilok kapuur	2	1	2	0
shankardaas guptaa	2	2	1	1
raajaagul	2	2	2	0
narendra chanchal	2	2	2	0
karan diivaan	2	1	2	0
diliip Dholakiyaa	2	2	2	0
baalakaraam	2	1	2	0
aanand baKshii	2	2	2	0
vinod raTho.D	1	1	1	0
vinod meharaa	1	1	1	0
vinod kumaar	1	1	1	0
udit naaraayaN	1	1	1	0
talat aziiz	1	1	1	0
t. s. motii	1	1	1	0
suniil dutt	1	1	1	0
sonik	1	1	1	0
shyaamal mitraa	1	1	1	0
shyaam	1	1	0	1
sheK muKataar	1	1	0	1
shauqat haidarii	1	1	1	0
shatrughan sinhaa	1	1	1	0
shashii kapuur	1	1	1	0
satish batraa	1	1	0	1
salaamat alii	1	1	1	0
s. k. mahaan	1	1	1	0
s. d. burman	1	1	1	0
rohiit	1	1	1	0
raajesh khannaa	1	1	1	0

raajendranaath	1	1	1	0
raajan mishraa	1	1	1	0
raaj kumaar	1	1	0	1
premanaath	1	1	1	0
pankaj udhaas	1	1	1	0
p. b. shriinivaas	1	1	1	0
madan mohan	1	1	1	0
lakshmiikaant	1	1	0	1
krishaN goyal	1	1	1	0
kamaleshvar	1	1	1	0
kamalesh avasThii	1	1	1	0
johnny walker	1	1	1	0
jitendra	1	1	1	0
jagamohan baKshii	1	1	1	0
jaanii baabuu	1	1	1	0
iqabaal	1	1	0	1
indra goyal	1	1	1	0
husnalaal	1	1	1	0
hR^idayanaath mangeshakar	1	1	1	0
gulraajaa	1	1	1	0
diliip taahil	1	1	1	0
diliip kumaar	1	1	1	0
dhananjaya	1	1	1	0
danny	1	1	1	0
bhuupen hazaarikaa	1	1	1	0
benii	1	1	1	0
balbiir	1	1	0	1
baabalaa mehataa	1	1	1	0
baabaa	1	1	1	0
ashok kumaar	1	1	1	0
anuup jaloTaa	1	1	1	0
annuu malik	1	1	1	0
amitaabh	1	1	1	0
abhijiit	1	1	1	0

This Lata Statistical Series will be concluded next time with a listing of her 57 female singing partners.

Surjit Singh

RMIM Archive Article "142".

Lata & 57 female singers of Hindi movie songs

Posted by: dussh@ttacs.ttu.edu (Surjit Singh[51]) surjit.singh@windmill.com (Surjit Singh)

```
---------------------------------------------------------------
            Lata & 57 female singers of Hindi movie songs
---------------------------------------------------------------
```

The following is the last post in the series of posts about Lata's songs. The previous ones were:

1) Lata - A statistical summary,
2) Lata with various music directors,
3) lyricists and
4) male singers.

Again, this includes only songs from HINDI MOVIES, other languages are excluded as are non-filmi songs. This one is about her female singing partners. As before, even people who are not professional singers, (like saadhanaa, for example) but said or sang a word or two are included, presumably because their names are mentioned on the record. I believe that she sang with almost every female singer who sang for Hindi movies after 1947 or so. For more info, please read the earlier posts.

The list is arranged as follows. There is the name of the female singer, total number of songs with her, total number of movies in which Lata sang with her, total number of duets (in which only Lata and the female is featured), the total number of songs with Lata, her and other people (it implies a triplet or a chorus).

Note: To make the pronunciation easy, I have adhered to the excellent transliteration scheme of Avinash Chopde, a scheme which should be universally adopted.

NAME	TOTAL	MOVIES	DUETS	OTHERS
aashaa bhosale	74	69	62	12
ushaa mangeshakar	62	57	58	4
giitaa dutt	34	27	25	9
shamshaad begam	27	22	23	4
miinaa kapuur	9	6	4	5
sudhaa malhotraa	9	8	9	0
kamal baroT	9	9	8	1
raajakumaarii	6	6	5	1
mubaarak begam	5	5	5	0
suraiyaa	4	4	4	0
miinuu purushhottam	4	4	4	0

51Source: "Lata Mangeshkar Gandhar Svaryaatraa 1945-1989"

sulakshaNaa panDit	3	1	3	0
zoharaa baaii ambaalaavaalii	3	3	2	1
miinaa mangeshakar	3	3	3	0
baby reNu	2	1	0	2
biinaapaanii mukherjii	2	1	1	1
honey iiraanii	2	1	1	1
sarasvatii raaNe	2	1	2	0
aaratii mukherjii	2	1	2	0
ushaa khannaa	2	2	1	1
pramodinii desaii	2	2	2	0
padmini kolhaapure	2	2	2	0
amiir baaii karnaaTakii	2	2	2	0
hemalataa	2	2	2	0
iraa naagarath	2	2	2	0
sushhamaa shreshTh	2	3	2	0
lalitaa phaDke	1	1	0	1
ranuu mukherjii	1	1	0	1
saadhanaa	1	1	0	1
lakshamii shankar	1	1	0	1
pearl padamasii	1	1	0	1
priyaa raajavansh	1	1	0	1
nirmalaa devii	1	1	1	0
premalataa	1	1	1	0
suman kalyaaNpur	1	1	1	0
siitaa agaravaal	1	1	1	0
umaa devii	1	1	1	0
umaa	1	1	1	0
shaantaa aapaTe	1	1	1	0
sandhyaa mukherjii	1	1	1	0
shivaangii kolhaapure	1	1	1	0
shailajaa	1	1	1	0
niilimaa chaTarjii	1	1	1	0
dilaraaj kaur	1	1	1	0
iilaa aruN	1	1	1	0
iilaa desaii	1	1	1	0
daisy iiraanii	1	1	1	0
aashaalataa	1	1	1	0
cha.Ndabaalaa	1	1	1	0
chanderakaantaa	1	1	1	0
miinaakshii	1	1	1	0
mohan taaraa talapade	1	1	1	0
mumataaz	1	1	1	0
miinaa patkii	1	1	1	0
kalyaaNii	1	1	1	0
kavitaa krishNamurtii	1	1	1	0
madhubaalaa zaaverii	1	1	1	0

Surjit Singh

RMIM Archive Article "164".

Lata Mangeshkar - Singer of Saint?

Posted by: apn@cs.buffalo.edu (Ajay P Nerurkar[52])

Author: Raju Bharatan

The recycled article that follows makes clear how Lata perfected her Urdu diction, so much so that Naushad, himself a more than competent speaker of that language and a stickler in such matters picked her for Andaaz to the consternation of Dilip. Enjoy (and pardon Raju for going overboard with the title of the piece). Ajay This is yet another article from the TOI, Bombay. It is an ex- tract from the book "Lata Mangeshkar : A Biography" by Raju Bharatan. -

Can you believe that Lata Mangeshkar was an itsy-bitsy teeny- weeny 532-day-old as Wazir Mohammad Khan brought, on 14 March 1931, the sound of music to Indian cinema with 'De de Khuda ke naam pe pyaare taaqat ho gar dene ki' in Ardeshir Irani's Alam Ara ? Those Urdu words of the first Hindustani song in the first Indian talkie must have registered indelibly in the psyche of Lata Mangeshkar. For she was to take Dilip Kumar at his withering word and prove that Urdu was no less her language of expression than Marathi. Lata, as I have already noted, was first exposed to the dizzy dazzle of Dilip Kumar on a local train, way back in 1947. "Yeh nayi ladki hai, achcha gaati hai" ("This is a new girl, she sings well") is how Anil Biswas paraphrased Lata to Dilip Kumar. When Dilip Kumar was told that Lata was a Maharashtrian, the Pathan in him reacted from the gut. "Inka ek problem hota hai", Dilip said of Maharashtrian Lata, "inke gaane main daal-bhaat ki boo aati hai" ("There's one problem about these people from Maharashtra, in their singing you get the odour of gravy and rice")! Stung in the tongue with which she was going to win over the world, the Honey Bee, from that very day, sat down to lessons in Urdu from a maulvi called Shafi. Lata notes that she worked ultra-hard, from that pungent point, to "achieve clarity and proper diction" in an Urdu language made for dialogue delivery by Dilip Kumar. Even so, when Dilip Kumar and Lata Mangeshkar were brought together some 23 years later for that Khushwant Singh "Weekly" cover story, the first enquiry from Dilip Kumar, in preparation for lunch, was, in effect, whether Lata Mangeshkar was a "daal-bhaat" (vegetarian). Lata was not, but she never for- got that early "daal-bhaat" odium cast on her singing worth by Dilip Kumar. At the first opportunity she got to render a duet with him, she so outsang Dilip Kumar that he realised sharply that the little Maharashtrian girl, of whom he was once "daal- bhaat" dismissive, had, in her singing, mastered the Urdu diction to a point where even Dilip Kumar was 'easy meat' for her ! In fact, Dilip Kumar now genuinely wondered how possibly he could have doubted her Urdu credentials when Naushad first let it be known that Marathi Lata would be singing "Uthaye jaa unke sitam" and "Tod diya dil mera" in his Nargis- Raj Kapoor co-starrer An- daz. Dilip Kumar, famous by then for his romantic mop of hair, had hit the roof when Naushad suggested the name of Lata. Lata then swore that she would one day, bring Dilip Kumar down to earth. The one who thought he was the greatest acting show on earth was soon to encounter, in Lata, the greatest singing show on earth. Lata in Andaz brought to the expression of Urdu poetry some of the flair Dilip Kumar brought to the expression of Urdu prose. Naushad had worked wonders with the girl. That for the Andaz class of sustained singing Lata Mangeshkar was awarded the Padma Bhushan as early as 1969, that for the Andaz class of sustained composing Naushad was awarded the Padma Bhushan only 22 years later in 1991 is a barometer of the metamorphosis in climate effected by this megasinger by which she was able to show each pioneer-composer his place. Indeed, by 1991, every single composer who claimed to have made Lata and Asha had unmade himself. Neither Naushad and Nayyar counted by 1991, only Lata and Asha did. Lata and Asha, they are the Corsican Sisters of our music. Hurt Lata by hurling the word 'monopoly' at her and Asha is hit at the same spot at the same time ! But Asha, really speaking,

52Source: Times of India, Bombay

only carries the onus of shouldering half a share of the Mangeshkar monopoly. All the big credits accruing from that monopoly have been to Lata - from the Padma Bhushan in 1969 to the no less prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke award in 1990. You are either born to charisma or you are not. You cannot achieve charisma. Least of all can you have charisma thrust upon you. Lata Mangeshkar at 60 was a milestone. Lata Mangeshkar at 65 is a speed-breaker. The breakneck pace at which music is written, rehearsed, rendered and recorded makes Lata a helpless giantess. She no longer needs to announce her retirement from films. Hin- dustani cinema has itself announced how much need it now has for her. There were those moments of high anguish when Lata felt diminished by the departure of contemporaries like Geeta Dutt, Mukesh, Mohammed Rafi, Kishore Kumar and Hemant Kumar. Today Lata is reduced to singing them in her Shraddhanjali series. This is but a reminder that, as far as Hindustani cinema goes, Lata is treading on her past. On her past and now on the past of other singing greats. -

RMIM Archive Article "383".

Lata's Best - Quiz Introduction, Questions

Posted by: Satish Subramanian[53]

Author: Raju Bharatan

Lata's Best
Quiz

by Raju Bharatan
Illustrated Weekly of India

In a series of articles I intend to post a quiz on Lata which was published in 1987 in Illustrated Weekly of India.

Each article will have one question about a Lata song, sung for a particular music director. You can post your answers, discuss about the song, and anything else about songs of Lata for that music director on RMIM. The intent is not to select winners but to reminisce and discuss songs of Lata.

The original article was by Raju Bharatan. The introduction to the article read as:

> Lata Mangeshkar is to song what Ravi Shankar is to the sitar. And Ravi Shankar is but one of the 20 composers whose movie songs feature in the recently released four-cassette album of Lata's favorite songs.
>
> Raju Bharatan has followed Lata's career closely through her 40 years. But for the magic of her voice he says, he may not have chosen to divide his interest between cricket and music. Now he draws on his knowledge and background to create an unique quiz in which Lata's best is questioned in a historical perspective.
>
> - Ill. Weekly of India, May 1987

53Source: Illustrated Weekly of India

The reference is to the "My Favourites" album of Lata. In each question in the quiz Raju Bharatan ponders over Lata's choices in this album. People who have read his biography on Lata (released in 1995) will see in this quiz snatches of material that have been elaborated in the book.

Before going to the actual questions, here is a small quiz:

> In the above introduction there is a mention of Lata's "40 years" of singing. The year of the article is 1987.
>
> But in another 1967 article, Lata's interview appeared marking the completion of "25 years" of her career. In 1992, HMV released a series of albums commemorating her "50 years" of playback singing (concurring with the 1967 article), but it was the same HMV that released the 1987 album too.
>
> So, why is there a difference/mistake in counting?

--
bye
satish

Question 1:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

> Master Ghulam Haider was, musically speaking, to Lata what Onkar Prasad Nayyar was to Asha. These two composers from the Punjab were the ones to spot the vocal spark in the two sisters. Therefore, it is no cause for surprise that Lata's legendary four-cassette album, "My Favourites", should come to be launched with a Ghulam Haider composition, "Bedard tere dard ko seene se laga ke", from "Padmini".
>
> What is surprising, however, is that Lata should have picked this Noorjahan-style solo from "Padmini" (1948) rather than her first ever solo for Master Ghulam Haider from "Majboor" (1948) "dil mera toda mujhe kahin ka na chooda tere pyaar ne".

It also happens to be the impromptu solo that Ghulam Haider composed exclusively for her when the two were returning by a local train after S.Mukerji at Filmistan had rudely rejected Lata's voice as "too shrill" for "Shaheed". Thus the three solos earmarked for Lata in Filmistan's "Shaheed" (1948)

1. badnaam na ho jaaye
2. hum kahaan aur tum kahaan
3. aana hai to aa jaao

came to be reluctantly recorded by Ghulam Haider in the mardana voice of Surinder Kaur.

It was this action of S.Mukerji's that prompted Ghulam Haider to predict:

> "Reject her this time if you think it wise, but there will come a time when producers and directors will come crawling to this girl's feet."

Bombay Talkies' "Majboor" and her "dil mera toda" solo in it thus became landmarks in Lata's career. Yet it was not this solo, but a Lata-Mukesh duet from "Majboor" that caught the public imagination. This duet thus became Lata's first hit under the baton of Ghulam Haider.

Recall that Lata-Mukesh duet from "Majboor" which also became a symbol, in the late 1940s, of the British's departure from India?

Question 2:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Another Punjabi composer to create a special vocal niche in Lata's heart was Shyam Sunder. When the time came for Lata to pick her Ten Best on the occasion of her silver jubilee in 1967, her listing came to acquire a prestige of its own for the inclusion of that all-time great "Lahore" solo composed for her by Shyam Sunder: "bahaaren phir bhi aayengi, magar hum tum juda honge".

When 'Malka-e-Taranum' Noorjehan paid her first visit to India after Partition, it was once again a Shyam Sunder creation for Lata, "saajan ki galiyan chhod chale" from "Bazaar", that Miss Mangeshkar opted to render on stage.

Now in her "My Favourites" album, Lata has selected from "Lahore" her "sun lo sajan meri baat" solo (unforgivably listed as "sun lo sajan dil ki baat" on the dust-jacket by HMV), along with her "Alif Laila" duet with Rafi, "kya raat suhani hai", as two compositions by which to remember Shyam Sunder.

"Alif Laila" becomes a important film since it was following her recordings for this Nimmi starrer that Lata developed serious differences with Shyam Sunder and was not on talking terms with him for months on end. In the end, only the fact that Shyam Sunder fell seriously ill and was on his deathbed made Lata relent. This is not to say that the fault lay with Lata. Shyam Sunder was known to be fond of his drink and this could have led to this prolonged hiatus between the two. In fact, it was when he was 'high' that Shyam Sunder was supposed to be at his composing best.

Lata was reportedly keen to pick not a Shyam Sunder duet, but a Shyam Sunder solo, from "Alif Laila" for this album. No, her choice was not to be, as you might expect, "bahaar aayee khili kaliyaan" (from the N50450 78 rpm record), but her "Alif Laila" solo on the reverse of the same record - a record which, lucklessly, HMV could not find for her.

Know that "Alif Laila" solo carrying the Lata-Shyam Sunder stamp all over?

Question: 3

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Significant among our master composers who shaped Lata's singing style and technique is Anil Biswas. In fact, this stalwart's sense of outrage had to be witnessed to be believed when Lata found no place for him in her silver jubilee Ten Best.

Now Lata has made up for that lapse by acknowledging Anil Biswas's role in her 40 years as a playback singer through two prize compositions of his:

1. Beimaan tore nainva nindiya na aaye (Taraana)
2. Mere liye woh gham-e-intezaar chhod chale (Anokha Pyaar).

These two Anil Biswas creations, it may be recalled, rank among those that put the seal on Lata the 'thrush throat non-pareil.'

Anil summed up the essential different between the two sisters beautifully when he noted that, while Asha's voice had body, Lata's had soul. He averred:

> "With Lata's coming, for the first time since the advent of the talkie in India, we could feel free to compose whatever we wanted in the knowledge that her surpassingly supple throat would take the notes in its stride."

Among Anil's memorable creations for Lata are:

1. Aankhon mein chitchor samaye (Mehmaan)
2. Aankhon se door jaa ke (Arzoo)
3. Tumhaare bulane ko ji chahta hai (Laadli)
4. Kat ti hai ab to zindagi (Naaz)
5. Baalamva naadaan ho naadaan (Aaram)
6. Badli teri nazar to nazare badal gaye (Badi Bahu)
7. Keh do ki mohabbat se na takraye zamana (Maan)
8. Baras baras badli bhi bikhar gayi (Gajare)

9. Matwale nainonvale ke main waari waari jaaon (Beqasoor)
10. Rooth ke tum to chal diye (Jalti Nishani)

Yet in the face of such a line-up of Lata's evergreens, Anil Biswas, when asked to name his best one ever for this melody queen, picked out a solo from a Nalini Jaywant-Dev Anand starrer.

Which solo from which film?

Question 4:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Tart-tongued Sajjad Hussain ranks among those few composers who could tell Lata off. And Lata took a lot of flak from Sajjad, because she knew that no other composer could create for her the calibre of compositions this erratic genius did.

"This is not a composition of Naushad-mian that you can take it easy," Sajjad would say. "You have to work hard, very hard, to give me the exact nuance I want."

How highly Lata regards Sajjad should be obvious from the fact that there are no fewer than three numbers from the limited repertoire of this composer in her album:

1. Jaate ho to jaao hum bhi yahaan (Khel)
2. Woh to chale gaye ae dil (Sangdil)
3. Ae dilruba nazren mila (Rustam Sohrab)

Each one of these selections is a gem with 'ae dilruba nazren'

rating among Lata's all-time classics.

As you hear this "Rustom Sohrab" 'soulful', you realize what Lata meant when she noted that she used to shudder every time there was a Sajjad recording in the offing, since every number composed by this wizard posed the ultimate test for a singer.

Sajjad, for his part, is on record saying:

> "Allah created Lata and Noorjehan to sing. After that I don't know why He bothered to create another woman singer at all!"

One film in which Sajjad had, however, virtually to go without Lata was R.C.Talwar's "Rukhsana" (1955). Lata fell seriously ill after recording just one solo for this Meena Kumari-Kishore Kumar starrer.

Yet that "Rukhsana" solo of Lata's endures as an unforgett-able in the face of the trail blazed by Asha Bhosle and Kishore Kumar in the film with "tere jahaan se chal diye."

y Which Lata solo?

Question 5:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Lata's choice of "mushkil hai bahut mushkil" from "Mahal" to spotlight the compositional artistry of Khemchand Prakash must come as a great disappointment

Her "aayega aayega aayega" ("Mahal"), of course, became a trend-setter - its aura only Salil Chowdhury could match (in "Madhumati") with "aaja re pardesi".

to connoisseur listeners. True, she could not have picked this composer's "aayega aayega aayega aanewaala" from "Mahal" all over again, since that would have made for a chestnut.

But surely she could have bestowed her choice on that classical Chhaya Nat solo, "chanda re jaa re jaa re," created by Khemchand Prakash for "Ziddi" (1948), especially, as Lata had once drawn pointed attention to how difficult it is to tune such a long opening line and how tellingly Khemchand Prakash had done the job.

C Ramchandra, too tried to do an "aayega aayega aayega" through the vocal aid of Lata when he got the chance to compose for a reincarnation theme in "Meenaar" (1954). The song emerged as a beauty on Bina Rai, a real 'haunter' extending over two sides of the N51120 78 rpm record, But "Meenaar" crashed - and with it that song.

Can you place that "Meenaar" haunter of Lata's in which the ghost voice of the 'Lady in White' was to be felt at its will-o'-the-wispy best?

Question 6:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Naushad feels that, overall, he has never got his full due from Lata. This may be the feeling of certain other top composers too, but Naushad's point is that no other music director's repertoire has given Lata so many hits singing so few songs. By which Naushad means that there has hardly been a Lata number by him that is not a hit!

Therefore, the task of picking out two Naushad favourites for this album must have been no easy job for Lata.

Her selections finally are:

1. Hamaare dil se na jaana (Uran Khatola) in raag Bihag.
2. Jo main jaanti bisrat (Shabab) in raag Maand.

Both are numbers widely heard to this day, so what is new in Lata's selections?

Well, in the case of Naushad vis-a-vis Lata, something new-sounding could have been created only by tapping the unusual. And the unusual, as it turns out, could have been tapped by Lata in the very two films, "Uran Khatola" and "Shabab", from which she has taken her choice.

All she had to do was to get HMV to procure, from the soundtracks of these two movies, her unissued solo version of Rafi hit in "Uran Khatola" and her unissued solo variation of a hit of her own in "Shabab" (set in raag Brindabani Saarang).

Given these guidelines, can you pinpoint the two songs Lata could have chosen as 'differently' representative of Naushad, one from "Uran Khatola" and the other from "Shabab"?

Question 7:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

There was a consternation in the ranks of our music directors as Lata announced, in the mid-1950s, that she would herself be making a Hindi film called "Bhairavi."

From Naushad to Shankar-Jaikishan, each composer expected to win her vote as the music director of "Bhairavi." But Lata's final choice fell upon Roshan.

From that point, it has been accepted that Roshan represents something extra special in her repertoire. Now Lata had the opportunity to pick something truly memorable composed by Roshan. But her selections, as represented by

1. Duniya kare sawaal (Bahu Begum)
2. Raat ki mehfil sooni sooni (Noor Jehan)
3. Paaon chhoo lene do (Taj Mahal)

come as almost a let-down.

Not that these numbers are not good - only they could have been so much better. When she chose on her silver jubilee Roshan's

- Ae ri main to prem diwani (Nau Bahaar)

her selection could not be faulted. Also Roshan's "duniya kare sawaal" stands already named by Lata as among her '25 Favourites' in Filmfare.

Somehow, when Lata is taking her pick from the treasure-trove of one of our original composers, we expect her to choose something that will hark back to the times of golden melodies.

Like, for instance, the GE28005 78 rpm record of "Raag Rang" which carries, on its two sides, two out of this world solos by Lata for Roshan,

1. Yehi bahaar hai duniya ko bhool jaane ki (Raag Rang)
2. Kis ki nazar ka mast ishara hai zindagi (Raag Rang)

Even Lata, you will agree, would be hesitant to choose between the two.

By the same token, in Nargis-Raj Kapoor's "Anhonee" (1952), the N50236 78 rpm record carried on one side "Main dil hoon ek armaan bhara" (Talat Mahmood). On the flip side of the same "Anhonee" was one of Roshan's more 'selectable' numbers for Lata.

Remember that Lata solo?

Question 8:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

On one side of the N53389 78 rpm record is the "Parakh" number chosen by Lata to represent Salil Choudhry in this album, "Mila hai kisi ka jhumka", with its thrilling blend of the oboe and the mandolin.

Also when you note that on the other side of the same record is "O Sajna barkha bahaar aayee", you know it as Hobson's choice for Lata.

What a pity today's generation of music lovers cannot experience the bonus of two such Lata lovelies on two sides of one record! As a collector remarked, "how can you really get the 'feel' of a vintage song unless you handle its record?"

"Mila hai kisi ka jhumkaa" (Parakh) was on a 78 rpm record, while Lata's second Salil choice, "Na jiya laage na" (Anand) was on an EP. Salil may have composed superbly in his later years too, but Lata, one feels, sounded best under his baton in the 78 rpm days.

1. Aa jaa ri nindiya tu aa (Do Bigha Zamin)
2. Dhitang dhitang bole (Awaaz)
3. Rim jhim jhim jhim (Tangawali)
4. Jaa re jaa re ud jaa re (Maya)
5. Aaha re magan mera chanchal main (Honeymoon)
6. Raaton ko jab neend ud jaaye (Mem Didi)

are some of Salil's early airs for Lata that reflect his refreshing spontaneity before he became conscious of the fact that he was a composing genius and began to try living up to that tag.

However, this tendency to be more complex that he need be was, according to Pt. Ravi Shankar, there in Salil even early on, otherwise Lata would not have rated him as next only to Sajjad Hussain in the matter of demands sought to be made on the singer.

In Bimal Roy's "Naukri" (1954), for instance, there is a solo in which Salil subjects Lata's voice to a thorough scrutiny.

Can you identify that "Naukri" solo?

Question 9:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

C Ramchandra and Lata represented the "meloduo" supreme in our film music! Their "dheere se aa jaa ri aakhiyan mein nindiya" (Albela) became the yardstick by which to measure lullabies in films.

Before Lata, C Ramchandra had given a whole array of hits with other female singers, ranging from Shamshad Begum to Amirbai Karnataki, Lalita Dewoolkar to Binapani Mukherjee. But after Lata appeared on the scene, C Ramchandra could think of no other female singer save her.

His evergreens for Lata are legion.

1. Balma bada nadaan re (Albela)
2. Kaahe naina laden (Jhamela)
3. Jo mujhe bhula ke chale gaye (Sangeeta)
4. Kat te hain dukh mein yeh din (Parchhain)
5. Dil unko dhoondhtaa hain (Yasmin)
6. Ae pyaar teri duniya se (Jhanjhar)
7. Tum kya jaano tumhari (Shin Shinaki Boobla Boo)

The last-named has now been picked by Lata to mark out C Ramchandra on the album. It is a composition that synthesizes the best of two terrific talents.

The late Shanker spoke no more than the truth when he hailed C Ramchandra as the "greatest all-rounder in Hindustani film music!" After all, Shanker had to take note of the fact that C Ramchandra could, no doubt with the help of Lata, match

him even in his specialist field of dance compositions with creations like,

1. Na maaro nazariya ke baan (Pehli Jhalak)
2. Sajna na jaa daras dikha jaa (Ladki)

The same aura was missing when Asha substituted for Lata, in "Navrang", though C Ramchandra's music in the film was a great hit. The Lata magic did return to his music as the two came together for V. Shantaram's " Stree" (1961) through airs like,

1. O nirdayi preetam (Stree)
2. Jhilmil jhilmil laharon ka (Stree)
3. Angana mein suraj muskaya (Stree)

But C Ramchandra's finest creation for Lata after they came together again, was in a film which never saw the light of the day: "Jitne Door Utne Paas" (on GE33578 record).

Remember from that film the Lata solo?

Question 10:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Dada Burman was handpicked by Lata to conduct the two musical programmes she was to present on the occasion of her silver jubilee.

Yet oddly, no composition of S D Burman's figured in her Ten Best for the occasion! If Dada Burman felt this anamoly, he maintained a discreet silence - after all, he had only just patched up his differences with Lata, after a five year spell of no recordings in her voice.

Now in 1987, Lata has sought to retrieve that 1967 missout

by naming two S D Burman solos by her in "My Favourites". These are:

1. Phaili hui hain sapnon ki baahen (House No 44)
2. Jogi jab se tu aaya mere dwaare (Bandini)

These two numbers present her at a peak calculated to make you wonder how Dada could have done without his Lata for so long.

1. So jaa re so jaa meri aankhiyon ke taare (Jeevan Jyoti)
2. Aankhon se door door hai (Mashal)
3. Rote rote guzar gayi raat re (Buzdil)
4. Dil ka dard na jaane duniya (Naujawan)
5. Tum na jaane (Sazaa)
6. Pighla hai sona (Jaal)
7. Pyaar bhari dhadkanon ke haar leke aaongi (Angarey)
8. Nain khoye khoye (Munimji)
9. Aa palkon mein aa sapne sajaa (Madh Bhare Nain)
10. Chaand phir nikla (Paying Guest)

are some of Lata's noteworthy numbers for Dada before they fell out.

Their quarrel was over Lata's evasiveness in giving a firm dubbing date for her "Pag thumak chalat hal khaye haai" number in "Sitaron Se Aagey" (1958). Following that, Lata did not record for Dada Burman for full five years.

With which Lata solo in which 1963 film did Lata and Dada come together again?

Question 11:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Five Shanker-Jaikishan compositions in this Lata album

represented evidently a windfall that shocked Shanker out of his life!

1. Main piya teri (Basant Bahar)
2. Laakhon taare aasmaan mein (Hariyali Aur Raasta)
3. Mujhe tum mil gaye humdum (Love in Tokyo)
4. Dil ki girah khol do (Raat Aur Din)
5. Unse mili nazar ke mere hosh (Jhuk Gaya Aasman)

are Lata's five selections from Shanker-Jaikishan's cornucopia.

But when you come to think of it, except for the first selection, the other four 'sound' almost as a left handed compliment from Lata to SJ! They do not warrant consideration, leave alone selection, in an album such as this.

Indeed, Jaikishan would have been at a loss to know how such 'chaalu' compositions of his came to gain Lata favour over weighty compositions like,

1. O basanti pavan paagal (Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai)
2. Rasik balama hai re (Chori Chori)

Shanker, for his part, had lost hope of holding Lata's attention even with creations like,

1. Jaao re jogi tum jaao re (Amrapali)
2. Jhanana jhan jhana ke apni paayal (Aashiq)

The latter two dance compositions may have been among Shanker's best, but once, just once, in "New Delhi" (1956), Jaikishan came up, in Lata's voice, with a dance composition that was at least fit to compare with anything created by Shanker.

Can you pick out that dance composition that ultimately sadly got left out of "New Delhi"?

Question 12:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Jaidev is no more, but his creations for Lata abide.

Especially "raat bhi hai kuchh bhigi bhigi" (Mujhe Jeene Do) which as a choral creation on a par with anything composed by Naushad in his heyday, is a happy choice by Lata. Her other Jaidev pick is "Yeh dil aur unki nigaahon ke saaye" (Prem Parbat).

More a pleasing than a thrilling composition by Jaidev, this "Yeh dil aur unki". A fitter choice from the same "Prem Parbat" would have been "Yeh neer kahaan se barse hain".

Somehow a lightweight choice like "yeh dil aur unki" does not seem to fit the depth image we carry of the Lata-Jaidev combine from compeling compositions like

1. Subah ka intezaar kaun kare (Joru Ka Bhai)
2. Kis kis ko deepak pyaar kare (Anjali)
3. Aaj achanak toot gaye kyon (Kinare Kinare)
4. Allah tero naam (Hum Dono)

Therefore, even from Jaidev's later years, one would have expected Lata to pick something like "Badra chhaye re" (Maan Jayiye). Or that exquisite solo she put over for him in "Sapna" (1969).

Can you summon to memory that "Sapna" solo symbolizing the best of Lata and Jaidev?

Question 13:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

In film music, Lata and Madan Mohan were made for each other. That Madan Mohan enjoyed Lata's special esteem became obvious during her silver jubilee when, while summarily ignoring compositions of the stature of Anil Biswas, Sajjad Hussain, C Ramchandra, S D Burman, Husnlal-Bhagatram, and Shanker-Jaikishan, Vasant Desai, S N Tripathi, Hansraj Bahl and Chitragupta, Lata (in her Ten Best) chose to make Madan Mohan the only one to be favoured with two compositions,

1. Lag jaa gale ki (Won Kaun Thi)
2. Bairan neend na aayee (Chacha Zindabad)

Now the quantum had doubled - there are no fewer than four Madan Mohan creations in this album.

1. Khelo na mere dil se (Haqeeqat)
2. Naghma-o-sher ki saughaat (Gazal)
3. Sapnon mein agar mere (Dulhan Ek Raat Ki)
4. Jab jab tumhen bhulaya (Jahan Ara, with Asha)

It passes one's comprehension, though, as to why Lata should have come round to picking creations of Madan Mohan's only starting 1963?

Surely, this was the stage in his career by which Madan was tending to become stylized in his presentation of ghazals. Maybe this stylization was what won for him the title of Ghazal King.

But there is also this theory that Madan became, by 1963, so set in his style of ghazal tuning that it made for the kind of creativity that acted as a bar on wider popularity.

That may or may not be a fact, but Lata, one feels, could

have taken at least two picks from Madan's pre-1960 repertoire.

How come she came so totally to ignore pre-1960 Madan evergreens like,

1. Hamare baad ab mehfil mein (Baghi)
2. Dukhiyare naina dhoondhe piya ko (Nirmohi)
3. Sitaron se poochho nazaron se poochho (Dhoon)
4. Chaand madham aasmaan chup hai (Railway Platform)
5. Hum pyaar mein jalne waalon ko (Jailor)
6. Tum ho saath raat bhi haseen hai (Mohar)
7. Ajab hai yeh duniya (Naya Aadmi)
8. Preetam meri duniya mein (Ada)
9. Tu pyaar kare ya thukraye (Dekh Kabira Roya)

In this pre-1960 oeuvre is also included that lovely Lata solo composed by Madan Mohan in the movie "Jaagir".

Track down that Lata solo.

Question 14:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Such was the impact made by Pt. Ravi Shankar with his compositions in the 1960 Hrishikesh Mukherjee film that the impression prevails that, Lata is Anuradha and Anuradha is Lata!

1. Saanware saanware kaahe mose karo jora jori
2. Jaane kaise sapnon mein kho gayin aakhiyaan
3. Kaise din beete kaise beeti ratiyaan
4. Hai re woh din kyon na aaye

These four Ravi Shankar creations for "Anuradha" offered a hard choice for Lata.

From the four, Lata has put "Saanwre saanwre" in the current album.

Now one of Lata's four solos in "Anuradha" which she had to later dub since she had failed to turn up for its original recording, led to a misunderstanding between her and Ravi Shankar. This resulted in his ultimately opting for the vocals of Vani Jayram for Gulzar's "Meera".

Which "Anuradha" solo led to that misunderstanding?

Question 15:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

That Lata should deign to remember Hemant Kumar as a composer on such an occassion is something that comes as an surprise. But then the Hemant Kumar tune picked by her for this album has always been among her top favourites: "Kuchh dil ne kaha", as articulated by her in "Anupama" is a number that makes compulsive listening.

It sounds haunting enough to have gained preference over other Hemant heart-stealers of Lata's like

1. Meri taqdeer ke maalik (Shart)
2. Yeh khamoshiyaan yeh sama (Samrat)
3. Zindagi kitni khubsoorat (Bin Baadal Barsaat)
4. Pyaasi hirni ban ban dole (Do Dil)
5. Hum ne dekhi hai (Khamoshi)
6. Chhup gaya koi re (Champakali)

"Champakali" was the Filmistan movie that proved

Hemant Kumar's undoing at a time when he was still at his zenith, following "Nagin".

Before "Champakali", Hemant had scored for yet another Filmistan movie in which a Lata & chorus number was viewed by him as one of his finest compositions ever.

Know that number and the Filmistan movie in which it figured?

Question 16:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Listeners often wonder why Lata came around to singing Khayyam's music much later than the tunes of certain lesser composers. It is not widely known that a misunderstanding with Khayyam over an early recording acted as a bar to Lata-Khayyam's early tuning.

In fact, the two really began collaborating only with "Barood" (1960) - and the 'Lata effect' was to be immediately felt in numbers like,

1. Teri duniya mein nahin koi sahara apna
2. Rang rangila saanwra mohe mil gayo Jaamuna paar
3. Teri aankhon ka rang nirala hai

One would have expected her to pick a "Kabhi Kabhi" number like "Mere ghar aayi ek nanhi pari" for Khayyam. But she has conferred her choice upon "Aap yun faasalon se" (Shankar Hussain), rather than "Apne aap raaton mein" from the same film, or the "Ae dil-e-nadaan" from "Razia Sultan".

"Ae dil-e-nadaan" of course ranks among Lata's all time

greats. It underscores the fact that words and music blend in a Khayyam composition as in no other maestro's.

Poetry has ever been the keynote of Khayyam's music and Lata's vocals have always helped bring this out tellingly. Among her earliest Khayyam numbers to stress this was the euphonious duet she put over with Talat Mahmood in "Hum Hain Raahi Pyar Ke", "Raaz seene mein mohabbat ka chhipaye rakhna".

And you only had to turn this N53568 78 rpm record to get a Lata solo in the typical Khayyam idiom. Know that Lata solo from "Hum Hain Raahi Pyar Ke"?

Question 17:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Laxmikant-Pyarelal came to films in 1963. Lata had noted these two youngsters as a pair that was musically capable of playing SJ at their own game. She created a sensation by pointedly ignoring SJ and picking a LP number (jeevan dor tumhi sang baandhi from "Sati Saavitri") in her silver jubilee Ten Best.

LP's early compositions for Lata certainly seemed to justify the confidence Lata had reposed in them.

1. Meghva gagan beech jhaanke (Harishchandra Taramati)
2. Kabhi to miloge jeevan saathi (Sati Savitri)
3. Neend kabhi rehti thi aankhon mein (Aasra)
4. Aankhon ki duniya hai tujh se jawaan (Laadla)
5. Suno sapana papihe ne (Aaye Din Bahaar Ke)

were early LP compositions for Lata that provided proof positive of the fact that this was no team of upstarts.

Today, they have completed 25 years in films and Lata has chosen to remember LP through two unusual compositions:

1. Yeh raat bhi jaa rahi hai (Sau Saal Baad)
2. Nigahen kyon bhatakti hain (Baharon Ki Manzil)

alongside,

3. Woh hain zara khafa khafa (Shagird)

How one wishes, though, that at least one selection of Lata's for LP had been symbolic of Anand Bakshi's early stage of writing for the duo. For instance, the solo that this duo created for Lata in "Madhvi" (1969).

Remember that "Madhvi" solo by Lata for LP-Anand Bakshi?

Question 18:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Lata has opted in this album to hold the scale even between RDB and LP. If LP have been favoured with three selections, RDB wins like attention. Probably, because Lata has always made a point of the fact that she can effectively sing that RDB style of compositions too - it is just that she prefers to leave this genre to Asha!

Now Lata has named, from R D Burman's repertoire,

1. Dilbar dil se pyaare Dilbar (Caravan)
2. Na jaa mere humdum (Pyar Ka Mausam)
3. Tere liye palkon ki jhalar (Harjaae)

Only in the last of these three compositions do we get the style of Lata vocals we expect from her under RDB's baton.

Believe it or not, thanks to Lata, RDB was once even in the running for a Sur-Singar award for the virtuosity with which he had got her to render, in the raag Jogiya, a number in "Chandan Ka Palna".

Can you spot out that "Chandan Ka Palna" Lata solo on the N55264 78 rpm?

Question 19:

Lata's Best?

Raju Bharatan, for Illustrated Weekly of India

Lata's historic album has led to the raising of many eyebrows for the fact that it carries no fewer than seven compositions by her own brother, Hridaynath Mangeshkar. Seven!

And five of these seven are 'private' compositions that HMV could alone have considered including in an album that, on its own admission, has been brought out to commemorate '40 Glorious Years' of Lata as a Playback Singer.

This is not to question Hridaynath's creativity as a composer. There can be no two opinions about the fact that he is the Marathi Jaidev.

But only two of his seven songs picked,

1. Om namah shivaye (Mashaal)
2. Yeh aankhen dekh kar (Dhanwaan)

could strictly have qualified for inclusion by Lata - if this album was supposed to signify her having completed four decades as a playback singer.

Just a single choice like "Tum aasha vishwas hamare" (Subah) would have been sufficient to bring out the potential of Hriday that has gone sadly unrealized in Hindi films.

Hriday's first Hindi film was "Prathana" (1969). His first recording for it was "O baanwri" in the voice of Asha, not Lata.

But there was a Lata and chorus number by him in "Prathana". Remember its opening line?

RMIM Archive Article "55".

Lata & Noorjehan - Parallel Lines Meet Part 1 - The Early Years

Vish Krishnan

Lata and Noor Jehan - Parallel Lines Meet

This rambling set of notes I made to myself are in a large part inspired by a posting some days back by Sami. I have been wanting to write this chronology for a long time now. It needed a catalyst somewhere. The following article is in 4 parts only because it is much too long to be just 1 or even 2 postings. But that is what it is - just one chapter.

The '30s and '40s represent the time of grand entrepreneurship for Indian cinema. I have attempted to bring to light, some of the great personalities that played their parts in the making of Lata and Noor Jehan, and gave a lot of their own lives to the cause. Perhaps it was selfless, and perhaps it was also motivated by business goals. On balance, the beneficiaries are you and me.

Here is Part I.

cheers

vish

Part I - The Early Years

Noorjehan was born in the Kasur area of Punjab on September 21 1929. There are some arguments about the year in which she was born. If 1929 is indeed right, then that would make her senior to Lata Mangeshkar by a grand 7 days.

Lata came along on September 28 1929 in the Holkar city of Indore - a place that now remembers the grand dame through the Lata Mangeshkar award instituted in 1984. For me personally, Indore brings back fond childhood and teenage memories.

While Lata was initially tutored by her father Dinanath, Baby Noorjehan was put to work under the tutelage of Ustad Ghulam Mohammed Khan. She pursued that training through her childhood years. By contrast, Lata's childhood was less stable. After Master Dinanath's death, she was adopted by Vinayak Damodar Karnataki, a close personal friend of the Mangeshkar family, godfather to the 5 siblings, and a rather famous moviemaker in his own right (better known as Master Vinayak, and also father of movie star Nanda).

Master Vinayak would play a key role in helping Lata and Asha get started with their careers. And further, he would one day bring the two sisters and Noorjehan together in a single movie.

I had read somewhere that Noorjehan moved to Calcutta where she became a stage actress at the rather tender age of 6. But it was also around that time that Punjabi movie makers like K.D. Mehra were looking to staff their Lahore productions with the right kind of people. I may be stretching this a bit, but perhaps people like Mehra can take credit for bringing the stage child of Calcutta to Lahore cinema.

The years 35-37 were to have bit parts for the child in movies like GAIBI GOLA (her first?), MISAR KA

SITARA, AAZADI, NARIRAJ, FAKHR-I-ISLAAM etc. During this period, Lata was taught by a series of accomplished musicians. She was still a child oblivious to the machinations of the movie world, and still unsure as to her real mission in life. She could be a singer or an actress. Indeed, both Lata and Noorjehan did just that - act and sing for movies. Lata acted her last movie role in the early '50s. Noorjehan made her career out of it.

Enter Mr. Dalsukh M. Panchholi. This (perhaps forgotten) moviemaker was doing roaring business in those days, especially in the arena of importing movie technology from the US. He had a fairly stable operation with Panchholi Studios, Lahore. And he will go down in history as the man who provided Baby Noorjehan with her first prominent role as well as a stable job in a series of Punjabi movies. People really took notice of the glamour girl in the Punjabi hit GUL-E-BAKAVLI(1939). I do wonder sometimes if our National Archives still have prints available for movies of this age.

More about Panchholi Studios. A young and ambitious director/story writer who called himself Shauqat Hussain Rizvi had become a close friend of Mr.Panchholi. He showed tremendous promise, and would not have any trouble finding employment with Panchholi OR with other studios. I suppose he came in looking for a job one day, and instead, he met Noorjehan, quite possibly on the sets of GUL-E-BAKAVLI, or soon thereafter.

The Punjabi bit parts continued with movies like HEER SYAL, SASSI PUNNU, YAMLA JAAT, CHOUDHURY etc. But after GUL-E-BAKAVLI, there was someone in Noorjehan's life. Three years after she had her first break, Shauqat Hussain made his directorial debut with Panchholi Studio's KHAANDAAN (1942). It was also around this time that Shauqat Hussain and Noorjehan got married. I am not sure as to the year, but from everything I have read, she may well have been dallying with her first teenage year when the wedding took place.

KHAANDAAN was a reasonably big hit. Starring Noorjehan and Ghulam Mohammed, it followed the two previous Panchholi hits KHAZANCHI and ZAMINDAR (1941-42). While these 2 movies did not star Noorjehan, they represented a distinguished gathering of stars like Shanta Apte, Ghulam Mohammed, Mohammed Ismail, Ramola, and a budding S.D. Narang.

But they were best known for their music by Master Ghulam Haider, by then a Panchholi standard. Master Haider was a close associate of Dalsukh M., and a big name in Lahore and Bombay alike. And he was already a big Noorjehan fan. While she was doing her bit parts in Panchholi's Punjabi productions, Master Haider was there, quietly setting the very same movies to music. But KHANDAAN was different. Here was the leading lady, the born-again GUL-E-BAKAVLI, singing what Master Haider himself would deem his best songs. The handful of Noorjehan songs in KHANDAAN are classics starting with "Ud Jaa Panchhi Ud Jaa", and moving on to "Shok Sitaaron Se Hilmil Hum Khelenge", "Mere Liye Jahaan Mein Chain Naa Qaraar Hai", and my favourite

Tu Kaun Si Badli Mein Mere Chaand Hai Aa Ja

Tar Hain Mere Zakhm-E-Jigar, Dil Mein Samaa Ja

The interlude and following stanzas flow into some beautiful Patdeep phrases the likes of which are seldom heard in movies.

KHAANDAAN was the first big movie in Noorjehan's life. It put her name right alongside the blockbuster names of the '40s. Another piece of trivia. The story for KHAANDAAN was written by Urdu playwright Imtiaz Ali Taj. Known and famous for his 1922 play ANARKALI (made into several stage productions of that era), he too would figure again in Noorjehan's life after 1947.

It was 1942.

For Noorjehan and Shauqat Hussain, there was only one more world to conquer. They had not yet come face-to-face with the glitter of Bombay cinema. Even as it was all one country, it must have seemed far. One thing was clear though. Panchholi Arts, huge as the studio was, had become a small place to contain their ambitions. They knew they would try Bombay out. It was only a matter of getting the first offer.

It was about now that Master Vinayak, a movie giant in his own way, was planning his exit from Navyug Chitrapat, a movie studio he had helped create. He was no stranger to this business, having started with Kolhapur Cinetone in 1933. His acting style had evolved from the stage medium to Shantaram's early Prabhat Studio films. It was during this period that he came under the influence of Marathi intellectuals such as P.K. Atre, C. V. Joshi and V. S. Khandekar, a rare breed that broke away from feudal social genre movies, and introduced what may be a major contribution of Marathi cinema of that age - modern Indian satire.

It was time for Master Vinayak to move out and create his own place with his own personal signature. Huns Pictures was born in 1936. The distinct political satire transported through the characters of Gundyabhau and Chimanrao (always played by Vishnupant Jog and Damuanna Malvankar respectively) became a Marathi movie phenomenon whose wit and sarcasm has been perpetuated by more recent literary personalities like P.L. Deshpande, Ram Gabale, G.D. Madgulkar, Raja Paranjape et al.

But in 1936, that is what what it was. Four years of creative fun at Huns Pictures. Master Vinayak moved on again, this time to create Navyug Chitrapat. The time was around 1940. Now, in addition to the movie studio, he had the responsibility of his godchildren. It would be a good two years into Master Vinayak's Navyug career before anyone would notice Lata Mangeshkar.

Two events of 1942 are relevant here. First, Master Vinayak started his last Navyug Chitrapat movie PAHILI MANAGALAGAUR, and ensured a bit part for 13-year old Lata. This, from all records, is Lata's first stint with movies. The music was created by Dada Chandekar, but to the best of anyone's knowledge, there was no Lata in any of the songs. Curiously enough, around the same time, a 9-year old Mumtaz Jehan Begum was making her debut as a singer with Bombay Talkies' BASANT. She did not know then that she would go on to epitomize glamour and become Madhubala, but would never sing again. Nor did Lata have an inkling that she would go on to epitomize glamour of a different kind.

Master Vinayak started PAHILI..., but due to a new business project, he would not stay long enough to complete it. Colleague R.S. Junnarkar finished the job, just in time before Navyug closed down.

But before all that, Master Vinayak put in a word with Vasant Joglekar, a script-writer/assistant director at Navyug who was working on his very own KITI HASAAL. His efforts at getting Lata to sing for PAHILI MANAGALAGAUR did not succeed, but with KITI HASAAL, he was almost adamant. Finally, one day, music director Sadashivrao Nevrekar brought the shy 13-year old into the recording studio.

The Marathi song "Naachu Ya Gade Khelu Saari Mani Haus Bhari" stands as Lata's first recording. The movie was KITI HASAAL, and the year was 1942. The song never saw the light of day. But Master Vinayak must have been at least a bit gratified. Perhaps he sensed that the foundation had been laid for a new standard in good female singing.

In the 1942-43 period, Master Vinayak launched Prafulla Pictures, his third and last motion picture studio. He would make 6 movies under this banner. Additionally, he would direct one movie under Shantaram's Rajkamal Kalamandir, and he would also act in Shantaram's DR. KOTNIS KI AMAR KAHANI. Of the 7 total movies created by the Master in the remaining 4 years of his life (1943-47), the first 3 were Marathi productions, and the remaining Hindi. Thus, before he departed, Master Vinayak made sure that Lata's entry into Bombay's Hindi medium, if not clear, was at least visible and within reach. The rest would be up to her. In his scheme of things,

his beautiful god-daughter was destined to be a great movie star and a great singer. Right or wrong, that was his belief, and he tried everything within his power to lay that groundwork. All 7 movies made during the 1943-48 period were to star Lata Mangeshkar, although not in particularly significant roles.

RMIM Archive Article "55".

Lata & Noorjehan - Parallel Lines Meet Part 2 - The Grand Migration

Posted by: vishk@cup.hp.com (Vish Krishnan)

It was now 1943, and business was booming between Bombay and Lahore. The give-and-take had been going on for a long time, and one man who knew the Bombay-Lahore connection really well was V.M. Vyas. Universally acknowledged today as the father of the Gujarati film industry, Vishnukumar Maganlal Vyas was not even 20 years old in 1922-23, when he started freelancing his scripts to moviemakers in the 2 big cities. His own first directorial break arrived in 1930, and by 1943, he was well established. Now was the time to try something totally radical.

Following the great success of Panchholi movies like KHAZANCHI, ZAMINDAR and Noorjehan's KHAANDAAN, V.M. Vyas decided that it was high time Noorjehan made a movie in Bombay cinema. He was ready to bring the star to Bombay. To this day, Vyas seems an unlikely candidate for this pioneering act. But he was ready with his script for DUHAAI at Sunrise Pictures, and moreover, Noorjehan was ready to make the move. Shanta Apte, the famous actress-singer of the pre-playback age, starred with Noorjehan and opposite leading man Kumar (anyone remember the "Sang-taraash" from MUGHAL-E-AZAM and the song "Zindabaad, Zinda-baad"?).

DUHAAI became Noorjehan's first Bombay movie, and a hit at that.

It is an interesting aside that V.M. Vyas thought about doing a movie called NOORJEHAN, some time in the early '50s. The script was started, Madhubala was slated to play the role and Chitalkar agreed to do the music. The project never got off the ground. Veteran Vyas is still alive as I write these lines, a grand nonagenarian among a handful of people still around from those times. I wonder what he thinks about the NOORJEHAN opportunity now. Of course, the movie was to be about a Mughal legend, not about our melody queen - although it can be, now!

Close on the heels of DUHAAI, Sunrise Pictures delivered NAUKAR, yet another Noorjehan hit with a different flavour. It was a tragic theme based on a story by Sadat Hasan Manto, a famour Urdu novelist of that time. The movie also starred Shobhana Samarth, Chandramohan and Yakub. And it was the first directorial break for Shauqat Hussain in the Bombay context. It would not be his last.

NAUKAR and DUHAAI had one more thing in common. Their music was done by Rafique Ghaznavi, a man who (one might suggest) was

rediscovered in NAJMA, the first ever Mehboob studio movie. He would also do the music for TAQDEER, the second movie under the Mehboob banner. But his biggest claim to fame was the deep, resonating voice with which he rendered the lines

Muddai Laakh Buraa Chaahe To Kya Hota Hai
Wohi Hota Hai Jo Manzoor-E-Khuda Hota Hai

Every Mehboob production started with those lines (credited to Agha Hashr Kashmiri, a Farsee-Arabic-Urdu scholar from the the turn of the century whose Shakespeare translations into Urdu have become legendary). With that, Rafique Ghaznavi has attained immortality.

The Bombay of 1943 did one more thing for Noorjehan. It brought her in touch with one of her most ardent devotees of all times, music director Datta Koregaonkar. The Zia Sarhadi-directed movie NADAAN was made at Jyoti studio, and it featured Noorjehan and Masood. It is K Datta's first Noorjehan movie, and the glory of those songs can never diminish. One is led to believe that Jyoti Studio was the place where Mehboob was introduced first-hand to the phenomenon that was Noorjehan. He had nothing to do with the movie, but he was a big fan of K. Datta's musical talents. At any rate, perhaps the most famous NADAAN song was "Ek Anokha Gham Ek Anokhi Museebat Ho Gayi", along with other gems like "Roshni Apni Umangon Ki Mitaa Kar Chal Diye", "Dil Doon Ke Na Doon, Baaton Pe Unka Kya Bharosa", "Ab To Nahin Duniya Mein Kahin Apna Thikaana" and a couple more.

Noorjehan went on to create several fans from the elite set of Bombay's music directors. The temperamental Sajjad Husain was among them. His 1944 DOST was another Noorjehan starrer that carried the movie based on her voice and Sajjad's music. The DOST song

Koi Prem Ka De Ke Sandesaa, Haay Loot Gayaa
Tha Ye Naazuk Mere Dil Ka Sheesha, Haay Toot Gayaa

reminds me of some old Lata songs from the late '40s. Another DOST song that goes "Badam Mohabbat Kaun Kare, Aur Ishq Ko Ruswa Kaun Kare" is also available on record in standard EMI releases.

In the same year, Bombay produced LAL HAVELI, yet another Noorjehan movie, this time with music by Mir Saheb, a veteran of big Minerva Movietone smashers like PUKAAR and SIKANDAR. But LAL HAVELI also had a cameo musical appearance by C. Ramchandra. There are quite a few songs in this movie that stars Surendra and Noorjehan. But only the song "Aao Mere Pyaare Saanwaria" (sung by Noorjehan) is credited to C. Ramchandra - a rare combination there.

By the mid-40's, Master Vinayak's Prafulla Pictures had finished its quota of Marathi productions. None of the 3 movies, CHIMUKLA SANSAR, MAZE BAL and GAJABHAU did terribly well at the box-office. Further, his quest for getting Lata a singing break-through was not meeting with much success either.

Finally, music director Datta Davjekar who composed for MAZE BAL and some other Vinayak movies would ultimately relent. The same script-writer/director Vasant Joglekar who did KITI HASAAL was now directing the Hindi movie AAP KI SEWA MEIN in 1945. It was outside the Vinayak framework, but it was still Prafulla Pictures.

AAP KI SEWA MEIN took more than 2 years to get released, but its place in history was secured when Datta Davjekar announced the successful recording of

Paa Lagoon Kar Jori Re,
Shyam Mo Se Na Khelo Hori Re

the first released Lata song for any Indian movie in any language.

The time was 1945.

Victorious as he might have been, Master Vinayak was now in deep financial trouble with Prafulla Pictures. Partly due to circumstances and partly because he had an eye on Hindi cinema for his god-children, he proceeded to make what would be his first Hindi movie. Somewhere in the deep recesses of the world beyond, the Gods applauded this move. Master Vinayak was about to set the stage for a great meeting.

BADI MAA is a remarkable checkpoint. Here is where for the first time, a 16-year old Lata comes face-to-face with her own awe-inspiring ideal in 16-year old Noorjehan. They were contemporaries by age, but in experience, there was a world of difference. Noorjehan had already seen the world she was to operate in for the rest of her life. Lata on the other hand was still to be weaned off the protective shell that was Master Vinayak.

The movie starred Noorjehan and a host of big names. At the bottom of the page, two names were mentioned in fine print - actresses Lata and Asha Mangeshkar!

Once again, Datta Koregaonkar did the music, and it brought back memories of NADAAN. One of the greatest Noorjehan songs ever

Diyaa Jalaa Kar Aap Bujhaaya
Tere Kaam Niraale, Dil Tod Ke Jaane Waale

is from here. The restrained classical structure is admirably executed by the teenage Noorjehan. Also worth possessing are "Aa Intezaar Hai Tera, Dil Beqaraar Hai Mera" and "Tum Hum Ko Bhula Baithe Ho". Finally, the Dhaani- Bhimpalasi ghazal

Kisi Tarah Se Mohabbat Mein Chain Paa Na Sake
Lagi Hai Aag Jo Seene Mein, Woh Bujha Na Sake

touches heights of greatness. BADI MAA probably holds the greatest collection of Noorjehan songs in a single movie. And hidden among these Noorjehan gems, there is a beautiful devotional song sung by Lata ("Maata Tere Charnon Mein"). The piece almost went unnoticed, almost more because it was sung by an almost unknown little girl called Lata Mangeshkar on an even lesser known 12-year old called Asha Mangeshkar.

"Maata Tere Charnon Mein" came close to making history. It was almost the first Lata recording to be released. Datta Davjekar just edged past it with his own AAP KI SEWA MEIN.

BADI MAA marked the beginning of a great friendship between Lata and Noorjehan that is alive to this day. It also marked the last time K. Datta would get to write music for Noorjehan. The man savoured his 2 movies with real enthusiasm, and never got over the turmoil of post-Partition India. But to be fair, we should state that he got a fair compensation. BADI MAA introduced K. Datta to the emerging voice of a new sensation. He lost one, and he gained one, and then some more.

Lata and Noorjehan would never do another movie together, nor would they ever sing together. In fact, their paths hardly crossed for nearly the next four decades, except through that extra-sensory mutual admiration that had a way of transcending geographical separation. In that respect, Lata and Noorjehan never lost touch with each other.

Noorjehan went on to complete BHAAIJAAN and VILLAGE GIRL, both in 1945. Pandit Shyam Sunder could not believe the skill with which she sang his VILLAGE GIRL compositions like "Baithi Hoon Teri Yaad Ka Le Kar Ke Sahaara, Aa Jao Ke Chamke Meri Kismat Ka Sitaara" and "Kis Tarah Bhoolega Dil, Unka Khayaal Aaya Hua".

And then was ZEENAT, another big musical success for the actress-singer. ZEENAT is credited with the first qawaali for Hindi movies. I could not say if this right, but regardless of the statistic, the Noorjehan-Zohrabai-Shamshad Begum trio excelled in

Aanhein Na Bhareen, Shikwe Na Kiye
Kuch Bhi Na Zubaan Se Kaam Liya

and made major headlines. As popular as the qawwaali was, ZEENAT was another collection of exquisite Noorjehan solos. The lullaby

Aa Ja Ri Nindiya, Tu Aa Kho Na Jaa
Nanhi Ki Aankhon Mein Ghul Mil Jaa

is a most gentle Piloo creation of that age. Another gem of a song is

Aandhiyaan Gham Ki Yoon Chaln, Gaaon Ujad Ke Reh Gayaa
Samjhe The Aasra Jise, Woh Bhi Bichhad Ke Reh Gayaa

Noorjehan also sings "Naacho Sitaarona Naacho, Ab Chaand Nikalne Waala Hai" and she wraps it up with the tremendous Darbari structure of

Bulbul-O Mat Ro Yahaan Aansoo Bahaanaa Hai Manaa
In Qafas Ke Qaidiyon Ko, Gul Machaana Hai Manaa

The composer was Hafiz Khan, and if I am not mistaken, he went to score at least one other movie. Was it MERA SALAAM that had the fabulous Asha-Talat duet "Haseen Chaand Sitaaron Ka Vaasta Aa Ja"?

RMIM Archive Article "56".

Lata & Noorjehan - Parallel Lines Meet Part 3 - Mehboob and Beyond

Posted by: vishk@cup.hp.com (Vish Krishnan)

Another phenomenon was now in the works. Ramjankhan Mehboob Khan, the little man from the Cutch area of Gujarat, was riding high with his own personal banner of Mehboob Studios. Already, his NAJMA, TAQDEER, and above all, the grand epic HUMAYUN were the talk of the industry. He had been watching the two singing-acting talents of Noorjehan and Suraiyya Jamal Sheikh. And after a little break, he was ready to recall Surendra, his own discovery from his Sagar Movietone days.

Mehboob had been experimenting with music directors like Rafique Ghaznavi and Ghulam Haider, but he missed the stability of an Anil Biswas, his permanent musical companion from Sagar and National Studios. A new partnership was to be forged. This one would stay until Mehboob's dying day - May 28 1964.

As great as her successes had been so far, Noorjehan herself could not predict her own next conquest. Unparalled to this day in her movie world stands ANMOL GHADI, a 1946 Mehboob Khan classic. It marked the beginning of his A-movies (ANMOL GHADI, AILAAN, ANOKHI ADA, ANDAAZ, AAN, AMAR) - I do take some liberty with spelling AILAAN in my own way.

Of all of Noorjehan's hits, not just in Bombay cinema but overall, ANMOL GHADI was the biggest name. It started and perpetuated the Mehboob-Naushad partnership. With a couple of understandable exceptions, all Mehboob movies would now feature Naushad Ali. ANMOL GHADI also rejuvenated the languishing career of actor-singer Surendranath B.A. LL.B. This was NOT his first movie with Noorjehan. They had starred together in Mir Saheb's LAL HAVELI. He would go on to make AILAAN and ANOKHI ADA, both with Mehboob Khan, his Bombay godfather. But for Noorjehan, this would be the first and last Mehboob movie.

ANMOL GHADI was also a great hit for Suraiyya Jamal Sheikh. We forget but Suraiyya has 3 good songs including "Main Dil Mein Dard Basaa Laayee". But they were surrounded by the overpowering Noorjehan aura. There really was no match for "Kya Mil Gya Bhagwan", "Mere Bachpan Ke Saathi", "Jawaan Hai Mohabbat" and above all, "Aawaaz De Kahaan Hai" - all of them among the best remembered Noorjehan creations.

Above all, the runaway success of ANMOL GHADI got the Shauqat Hussain-Noorjehan team convinced of one thing. They could do it on their own. This was really just their fourth year in Bombay,

and just about every Noorjehan movie had been a gold mine.

The idea of a Shauqat Hussain movie banner had been brewing for a while. It was really after ANMOL GHADI that they gained the kind of confidence and financial capital they needed for the jumpstart. Noorjehan was still on contract to finish S. F. Hasnain's DIL and Ismail Memon's HUMJOLI.

The time was 1946.

Things were slowing down a bit for Master Vinayak. He had just turned 40. It had been a busy life. From Prabhat to Huns to Navyug to the present financial mess of Prafulla Pictures, he had seen a lot of the good and bad times. In parallel, he was playing family man, and almost single-handedly managed the upbringing of the Mangeshkar siblings. His biggest achievement, as history would bear out, was not Lata Mangeshkar the teenage actress, but Lata, the upcoming master singer whose first recording had already been released under the auspices of Prafulla Pictures.

And now he was tired.

BADI MAA had kicked off the Hindi production sequence for Vinayak. In 1946, he would direct his second Hindi movie. SUBHADRA is notable for a couple of reasons. First, it introduced Lata Mangeshkar to Vasant Desai, a mainstream MD already on the payroll of Shantaram's Rajkamal Kalamandir. And more interestingly, singer-actress Shanta Apte sings a beautiful duet with Lata. I am still trying hard to locate "Main Khili Khili Phulwaari".

In the same year, Master Vinayak finished the last movie of his life. It was only appropriate for him to end his career with V. Shantaram, the man who gave Vinayak his first break in the 1932 Marathi production AYODHYECHA RAJA. But our movie here is JEEVAN YATRA, a Rajkamal production directed by Master Vinayak, set to music by Vasant Desai, and enacted by an ensemble of big names like Nayantara, Yakub, Pratima Devi and of course, one small name - Lata Mangeshkar. Her solo "Chidiya Bole Choo Choo" is now an antique - a rare gem that would make any collector proud.

The big war in Europe was now over. The Firangi had announced their intent. They would leave soon. But somewhere in the hallowed government buildings of Whitehall and Downing Street, Rt. Honourable Sir Cyril Radcliffe was at work with his scalpel over a drawing that looked roughly like the map of 1946 India. He looked for easy boundaries like rivers and mountains, but nature was not helpful. It would force him to use his judgment. Noorjehan had seen both sides of the new border, Lata had had just the Bombay view of it, and Judge Radcliffe had never set foot on the subcontinent.

So as Noorjehan was savouring her success with ANMOL GHADI and Lata was not quite over the euphoria of her first recording, India was being split in two.

Master Ghulam Haider had left Panchholi Arts in 1943 after some great box- office successes like KHAZANCHI, ZAMINDAR and POONJI. His Noorjehan movies were also done for Panchholi. Starting with the Punjabi creations GUL-E-BAKAVLI, YAMLA JAAT and CHOUDHURY, he takes the credit for KHAANDAAN, Noorjehan's first Hindi movie in a lead role, and a great one.

In 1944, Master Haider left Lahore and came to Bombay. It was only a year after Noorjehan and Shauqat Hussain had made their move. In Master Haider's case, the sponsor was the newly formed Filmistan - a breakaway enterprise from the parent Bombay Talkie. The break was engineered by heavyweights like Ashok Kumar, director Gyan Mukherji, producer-director Sashadhar (S) Mukherjee and the money-man Rai Bahadur Chunnilal Kohli, whose 20-year old son Madan Mohan was still at war somewhere in Europe. The first Filmistan movie CHAL CHAL RE NAUJAWAAN was set to music by veteran Ghulam Haider, and perhaps its most memorable contribution is the patriotic Ashok Kumar song "Bolo Har Har Mahadev Allah-O-Akbar".

Master Haider would stay on in the hope of finding his place in Bombay cinema. Mehboob's last pre-Naushad movie HUMAYUN was a big hit, but not so much because of Ghulam Haider's music. He was looking for that something that would make him stay. And we can be sure he longed for that one movie that would partner him again with that voice - one that caused him to leave Lahore in the first place.

It was not to be. Noorjehan and husband Shauqat Hussain had already started Shauqat Art Productions in Bombay, and rumour had it that they had started work on their first film. It was also discovered that they had recruited the little-known 24-year old Yusuf Khan to play the lead role opposite Noorjehan. Maestro Feroze Nizami was recruited to score the music. The movie was JUGNU, and looking back now, it was almost as big a hit as ANMOL GHADI. While the Rafi-Noorjehan duet "Yahan Badla Wafaa Ka" became synonymous with JUGNU's success, Noorjehan's 3 solos defined its very soul. The song "Umangen Dil Ki Machlin, Muskurayee Zindagi Apni" comes from vintage stock. And as for the other two ("Aaj Ki Raat Saaz-E-Dil-E-Purdard Na Chhed" and "Tum Bhi Bhula Do, Hum Bhi Bhula Dein"), together, they constitute the hard-hitting realization that Lata Mangeshkar's early influence was rooted in Noorjehan's voice. This is especially true for "Tum Bhi Bhula Do...". Close your eyes and listen carefully. This could be Lata Mangeshkar singing for Feroze Nizami.

JUGNU was released in 1947. But already, the Lahore immigrants (Master Haider and Noorjehan) were starting to have second thoughts. The British plans for India's future were no big secret.

Dalsukh M. Panchholi, the grand film distributor of Lahore was seeing the writing on the wall. He had given both Noorjehan and Ghulam Haider their first major break in Lahore cinema. In 1946-47, he too packed his bags and came to Bombay, leaving the giant Panchholi Art Pictures to its Lahore fate. It must have hurt to just walk away from an Empire, possibly the most modernized studio in all of South Asia. Panchholi never got over the depression.

India was free. The key Noorjehan protagonists, Panchholi, Ghulam Haider, Shauqat Hussain, and Noorjehan herself, were now all in Bombay.

Master Vinayak was no more. His last project was conceived as the movie MANDIR. Lata would act in it and sing as well. Vasant Desai would score the music for it, but Master Vinayak would not be part of it. Long term Navyug associate D.D. Patil completed the movie. What would be Vinayak's last turned out to be Patil's first. The new guard had arrived.

Dinkar Dattajirao Patil, an 80-year old grand master today, wrote Master Vinayak's biography in the early '70s. A well-deserved tribute that is. Vinayak was a great man. Amidst controversy, he kept all his family promises without compromising his professional zeal and output. Through his life, there was innuendo to the effect that he had secretly married Lata's mother after friend Dinanath passed on. We will never really know. All that mattered in 1947-48 was that with a handful of bit parts and less than a dozen songs in her resume, 18-year old Lata Mangeshkar was an orphan all over again.

Life was also in a state of turmoil for Noorjehan and Shauqat Hussain, although their battle was on a different front. Even with her raging successes of the last 5 years, Bombay seemed liked a strange land. With Shauqat Arts still in its infancy (albeit with one success), they decided to move again, this time back to Lahore. There was one more movie to finish. Offering yet another musical treat from Pandit Amarnath and Husnlal-Bhagatram, MIRZA SAHEBAAN marked the end of what V.M. Vyas's DUHAAI had started - Noorjehan's glorious Bombay years.

Once again, MIRZA SAHEBAAN was a popular hit. Noorjehan's solos like "Kya Yehi Tera Pyaar Tha, Mujhko To Intezaar Tha" and "Aa Ja Tujhe Afsaana Judaai Ka Sunnayen, Jo Dil Pe Guzarti Hai, Woh Aankhon Se Bataayen" were sweet. But for a change, the most popular

songs of the movie were sung by the happy trio of Noorjehan, Shamshad Begum and Zohrabai Ambalewali.

It was now 1947-48. At the musical helm of Bombay cinema were stalwarts Datta Koregaonkar, Sajjad Husain, Naushad Ali, Anil Biswas, Khemchand Prakash, and the Lahori Filmistan recruit Master Ghulam Haider. And not far away, a 29-year old Ramchandra Narhar Chitalkar was already creating trouble with his quest for the new swing sound. The classicists would frown first, and then give in. But for now, they were all united in the quest for the next generation female voice.

Lata's Vasant Desai movies, her K. Datta connection and her exposure to Rajkamal Kalamandir had all collectively made an impact. She was known in some circles as the little girl with some promise, but none were willing to take a chance, EXCEPT Ghulam Haider. It was in 1948 when Master Haider, perhaps with a nostagia for Noorjehan's voice, worked hard to get Lata her first few breaks in the post-Partition, post-Vinayak age. Three movies are notable in this range - MAJBOOR, PADMINI and for the record, Filmistan's SHAHEED. I believe that MAJBOOR ranks as Lata's first breakaway from the Master Vinayak cocoon. The song "Dil Mere Todaa, Hai Mujhe Kisi Ka Na Chhoda" is clearly a take-off on the Noorjehan style. It was also Lata's first choice in her 1985 MY FAVOURITES release a 4-cassette collection with songs spanning the 1948-1981 period. Also in 1948, the Padmini song "Bedard Tere Dard Ko Seene Se Lagaa Ke" became popular.

And the Noorjehan-soundalike package started to become known. Ghulam Haider was elated at the result. It was part of his nostalgia. It was also the last straw. He would some day go back to the real thing. But for now, he was infatuated with this new voice.

Ghulam Haider had a few new projects. One was PATJHAD, a movie that Panchholi, his old benefactor, had salvaged while essentially on the run from Lahore. Together, they finished it in the same year (1948). The other movie was Filmistan's SHAHEED. The studio had already employed Kumar Sachin Varman (as the titles of those movies used to state) as their music director starting with AATH DIN, but had not forgotten the pioneering start they had received from Master Haider. After a brief hiatus, they recalled him, this time to do the music for SHAHEED.

In an interesting incident that Lata herself narrates in her "I remember Madanmohan release" (1993), Master Haider insisted on recording a SHAHEED song featuring Lata's voice. It was to be a brother-sister song that went "Pinjre Mein Bulbul Bole, Mere Chhota Sa Dil Dole". To the utter rage of Filmistan's boss-man Rai Bahadur Chunnilal Kohli, the brother's voice was to be supplied by his own 24-year old son Madan whose good-for-nothing

playboyish ways around the studio were getting on daddy's nerves.

Both parties had it their way. Master Haider completed the recording of the Lata-Madan duet, and Rai Bahadur dropped it from the movie and from the album. The question is: who won?

I know I did. But for that meeting, my growing days would have been without the wonderful gift of ADAALAT songs, among a host of other beauties.

On balance, the Lata-Ghulam Haider partnership did not produce too many songs. That was not its purpose anyway. Strongmen Anil Biswas, Khemchand Prakash, and soon after, Naushad and Chitalkar picked up on this voice. And she had already met her future brother Madanmohan. Lata needed no more help. Ghulam Haider's job was done. He had picked up where Master Vinayak left. He would do a few more movies for Bombay cinema. Notable among them was KANEEZ, a Munawwar Sultana hit with songs mainly by Shamshad and Geeta Roy. But the background music for the movie was composed and conducted by a new Panchholi associate - Omkar Prasad Nayyar. That was OP's first musical opportunity for Hindi movies.

For now, Master Haider must have felt a great sense of achievement. With that, he quietly began folding up his belongings and by 1950, he was back in Lahore.

For Lata Mangeshkar, the rest of history is on record. For the most part, anyway.

Back in 1947-48, Noorjehan and Shauqat Hussain finished MIRZA SAHEBAAN, their last Bombay project, and left for what was now Pakistan. For the next 4 years, there was nothing for her to do. Big fans like K. Datta were Sajjad H. were languishing on this side of the border waiting for a miracle about to happen. Other MDs like Ghulam Ahmed Chishti, Khurshid Anwar, Rashid Attre, Firoz Nizami and Master Haider were all somewhere in transit.

In 1951, she co-produced and acted in CHANWAY, a Punjabi movie under the Shauqat Arts banner. But the music was just not there.

In retrospect, the Lata years took a long time to shape up. When they did, they stayed. For Noorjehan, the Partition was a big blow. It would be a couple of years before she would get back in the groove. In 1952, the new Lahore studio Film Asia produced DUPATTA, and once again, Feroze Nizami delighted the world with Noorjehan songs like

Saanwariya Tohe Koi Pukaare
Aa Ja Re Soye Chaand Sitaare

This one makes my top-10 list for Noorjehan.

By this time, Master Haider was back in the swing of things. He started his own production company along with some friends, and made one movie there. I lose track of Ghulam Haider's work at this point, but the story has a good ending. He was finally reunited with his GUL-E-BAKAVLI. It had been 10 years since KHANDAAN, Noorjehan's first Hindi movie in a lead role, and her last Ghulam Haider movie of the '40s. In 1953, Noorjehan would star in GULENAR and LAILA. The script and direction for GULENAR was undertaken by intellectual movie-man Imtiaz Ali Taj who, along with Sadat Hasan Manto and a host of others had also moved to Lahore after the Partition. The other movie (LAILA) was scripted and directed by husband Shauqat Hussain.

Both movies were scored by Master Haider. They were also his last. The 45-year old master music composer died in 1953.

With everything in the world going her way starting 1948, there was no stopping Lata Mangeshkar. And with all the job offers coming in from the most unpredictable sources, she found the time for a couple of new activities. In 1950, she would team up again with Dinkar Patil and actually score the music for his movie RAM RAM PAHUNE. She would team up again with Dinkar Patil to found Surel Productions in 1952.

So, a couple of years after Noorjehan's production CHANWAY, Lata produced WADAL (1953). And as Ghulam Haider was preparing deliver his last few Noorjehan movies in the 51-53 period, Datta Koregaonkar, the old Noorjehan fanatic was creating 3 musical gifts (DAAMAN, GUMASTA and RISHTA), all to be sung largely by his new love - the voice of Lata Mangeshkar.

And again, just as Noorjehan's DUPATTA was hitting the scene in Pakistan, Lata would do her last acting role in the Hindi-Marathi dual release, the C.Ramchandra-scored CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI. She would never act again, or score music under her original name. Noorjehan, to the best of my knowledge, never took credit for any musical scores.

RMIM Archive Article "57".

Lata & Noorjehan - Parallel Lines Meet Part 4 - The last 40 years

Posted by: vishk@cup.hp.com (Vish Krishnan)

After the passing of Ghulam Haider, Noor Jehan was, in a way, temporarily orphaned. The new front of music makers was still regrouping. She would star in around 10 more movies between 1955 and 1963. I wonder if any of her Pakistani movies of that age (PATEY KHAN, LAKHT-E-JIGAR, QAIDI, INTEZAAR, NOORAN, CHHOO MANTAR, ANARKALI, PARDESAN, NEEND, KOEL, GHALIB, BAJI) made it big. I have lost track of Noor Jehan's movies following 1963. Did she even do any?

The Pakistani music scene of the '50s was dominated by the old stalwarts - first Master Haider, and later, Rashid Attre, Chishti and Khurshid Anwar. The research is still on, and it may take a couple of years to collect all this data.

For now, I wll ramble on just a bit about Noor Jehan's post-Partition work.

Rashid Attre's classic song "Mujh Se Pehli Si Mohabbat Mere Mehboob Na Maang" is from QAIDI, a mid-'50s movie. To this day, I think of this song as Noor Jehan's best. There is at least one other Rashid Attre song I remember, another smashing classic. Set in a loose Bageshri framework, Noor Jehan sings:

Lat Uljhi Suljha Re Baalam, Main Na Lagaaongi Haath Re
Chaand Se Mukhde Ko Naagin Zulfen, Chaahe Dasein Saari Raat Re I will never tire of it.

Another master classicist was Khurshid Anwar, who did very few pre-Partition movies for Bombay cinema (notable are NISHANA, an Ashok Kumar-Madhubala-Geeta Bali starrer of 1950, and SINGAAR, and 1949 musical treat starring Madhubala and Suraiyya). From the '50s, I recall 3 Noor Jehan songsby Khurshid Anwar, and they are all cast in a classical mould. The Miyan Ki Todi rendition of "Jis Din Se Piya Dil Le Gaye, Dukh De Gaye" perhaps does not match up to our standards of virus-free and domesticated classical singing, but it has its place. And to top it, the Jaijaiwanti song "Dil Ka Diya Jalaaya Toone" is a must-have. And then in a style that almost completely describes the latter-day Noor Jehan, she sings Khurshid Anwar's wonderful Tilak Shyam composition

Saagar Roye, Leheren Shor Machaayen,
Yaad Piya Ki Aaye, Naina Bhar Aaye

There was also this nostalgic treat from G.A. Chishti's LAKHT-E-JIGAR ("Chanda Re Chanda Mere Daaman Ko Thaam Re"). Hazrat Chishti, in his pre-47 days was a colleague of Pandit Amarnath, and for a while, had the charge of Khaiyyaam's tutorship.

In a weak nostalic moment, Noor Jehan put in a half-song for Bombay. The time was 1955. OP Nayyar, a giant personality then as he is now, was in trouble with the music directors' association. The movie was MUSAFIRKHANA, and it starred Shyama and Karan Diwan. For Rafi, the MUSAFIRKHANA duet

Jhoote Zamaane Bhar Ke,
Jadu Kaisa Daar Gaye Mo Pe, Neechi Nazar Kar Ke

must have been a replay of the JUGNU dream all over again. In his own words, he owed his first big popular break to JUGNU and its protagonists.

One wonders why Noor Jehan did that crazy thing, just a bit appearance. My guess is the Panchholi connection. Mr. Dalsukh M. Panchholi who gave Noor Jehan her first real movie also provided OP with his first full assignment in his own AASMAAN, may have brought Noor Jehan over for one last time. For OP, it came at a time when he needed all the support he could get. He would never forget that gesture. Panchholi himself died in 1959, four years after what I think was Noor Jehan's last Bombay song. He had just turned 50.

The '50s and early '60s of the Pakistan movie scene gave us a new breed of musicians like Nazir Ali, Nazar Hussain, Mohammed Ali Mannu, Niaz Ahmed, Mohsin Razaa, Salim Iqbal and on. They worshipped that voice and they still do. One song I can never forget is (and I have no idea as to the composer):

Nighaahen Milaa Kar Badal Jaane Waale,
Mujhe Tujh Se Koi Shikaayat Nahin Hai
Ye Duniya Badi Sangdil hai, Yahaan Par
Kisi Ko Kisi Se Mohabbat Nahin Hai

The lyrics of this song are catchy, apt and almost funny (although the song does not mean to be). At one point, Noor Jehan says

Karoon Khud Main Fariyaad Apni Zubaan Se
Girein Toot Kar Bijliyaan Aasmaan Se
Main Ashqon Mein Saare Jahaan Ko Bahaa Doon,
Magar Mujh Ko Rone Ki Aadat Nahin Hai

And then there is the world of Noor Jehan's Punjabi songs. O what a treat it is! I really do not know if these songs are from movies. But they are a lot of fun. In one song, Noor Jehan

sings:

Sannu Neher Waale Pul Te Bulaa Ke,
Te Kore Maahi Kitthe Reh Gayaa
Saddi Akkaan Vichho Nindraan Udaa Ke
Te Kore Maahi Kitthe Reh Gayaa

And in other beautiful rendition in Madhyamaad Sarang, she says:

Ja ja We, Tainu Dil Ditta, De Ditta, Alla Vaaste

The list goes on, but I will stop with two of my current favourites:

Seyoni Mera Maahi Mere Paag (Bhaag) Jagaawan Aa Gayaa
Mainu Heer Banaawan Aa Gayaa and
Sun Vanjali Di Mithdi Taan Re,
Main Ta Ho Ho Gayi Qurbaan Re

Noor Jehan's musical output diminished after the mid-'60s. Some time in the believe Noor Jehan has recorded a few pieces of that serial. But other than that, she has been in semi-retirement for a few years now.

The Mailika-E-Tarannum has released several ghazals on record in the last 30 years. The Indian recording industry is gradually bringing the gems over. Perhaps some day I will write an addendum.

In the early '80s, upon invitation from Bombay's old fans, the melody queen visited India for that grand concert where Lata met her long-time friend in person. It had been a few years. People who attended the evening came back with their eyes a bit teary from the experience.

In the mid '80s, our very own Asha Bhonsle took a turn from her usual R.D. Burman fare, and decided to experiment with the ghazal for a while. Was it the Khaiyyaam influence of Umrao Jaan? Just a guess. In any event, she released 3 albums. One was a joint collection with A. Hariharan, the second was with Ghulam Ali (Meeraj-E-Ghazal) and third one, titled KASHISH was a triibute to Noor Jehan. In this collection, she sings some Noor Jehan originals.

I am tempted to suggest that Asha does really well in some songs. My favourites from this album (as my favourites from the corresponding Noor Jehan originals) are:

Nazar Hussain's

Gul Khile Chaand, Raat Yaad Aayi

Aap Ki Baat, Baat Yaad Aayi

and Mohsin Razaa's

Neeyat-E-Shauq Bhar Na Jaaye Kahin
Tu Bhi Dil Se Utar Na Jaaye Kahin

Epilogue

It is in the context of this album that I make my last point of this dissertation. Noor Jehans originals were all rendered in the '60s and '70s. And they all have a sense of pristine and raw quality about them. This is a different Noor Jehan we hear from her days in Bombay. The Asha homage by contrast is highly normalized, and I might suggest, tame.

I would hazard the suggestion that in 1947, Lata was trying to get close to Noor Jehan's voice-control. In the next 20 years, the two movie industries diverged in many ways, but one point is relevant here. Lata's trainers, especially Anil Biswas and Khemchand Prakash, wanted a domesticated, classicized, well-modulated voice that would never stray into savage territory.

I don't believe anyone put Noor Jehan through that kind of scrutiny in the early '50s. She was the undisputable queen. They wouldn't dare tell her what to do. On the other hand, Lata was the great rookie of 1948.

By the early '60s, the contrast was stark. In 1947, when Noor Jehan delighted us with "Tum Bhi Bhula Do, Hum Bhi Bhula Dein" (JUGNU), it seemed as though Lata's ideal singer was right there. But the germs of voice-demodulation were present. They always are. In Lata's case, these were carefully checked and almost clinically removed by master surgeons like Anil Biswas. It appears that in Noor Jehan's case, the demodulation went unchecked, and grew almost wildly. The musical handling of the words, the pronunciation, the control, and just the overall delivery all too often added up to a certain raw-ness. Certainly age had something to do with it. But there was also the environment.

In a Nazar Hussain-composed song from the '60s, Noor Jehan sings:

Kyoon Chhoda Tumne Saath Hamaara Jawaab Do
Khaamosh Kis Liye Ho, Khudaa-ra Jawaab Do

As she throws her voice out, the lines almost start to sound like "Jawaab Dau", and "Khaamaush Kis Liye Hau".

Perhaps this is a feature, not a bug. And perhaps it was a disservice to the Indian audience committed by Surgeon General Anil Biswas and his distinguished colleagues of the late '40s that forever rendered Lata (and Asha) incapable of this pristine-ness. But what do I know? I grew up believing that the Lata modulation was the best there was, and then I heard the latter-day Noor Jehan BEFORE I heard the Noor Jehan of the '40s.

Maybe it was for the best. Lata and Asha have their place with their masters and their proteges - as does Noor Jehan.

RMIM Archive Article "171".

The Malika turns 73 - Noorjehan

Posted by: vishk@cup.hp.com (Vish Krishnan)

Author: Vish Krishnan

Today, September 21, is Noorjehan's birthday. I believe she is now 73 years old. It is hard to say really. Filmographers have not been able to agree on the year of birth. Some say it is 1929, and that is highly suspect. By the time she made BADI MAA in 1945, she was already a mother of 2. Now, while she could have been 16 years old then, it is quite unlikely. I am more inclined to go with 1922, a year that Marathi journal- ist Isaak Mujawar stipulates (don't remember very well, but this may be somewhere in his book LATA TE NOORJEHAN, a publication I discovered at the NCPA in B'Bay). As part of her birthday memories, here are some of her rare and forgotten songs. I don't remember movie names, and quite possi- bly, some of them are not even from movies. It would help a lot if someone could fill in the relevant (or even not so relevant) details. Alongside her TV serial (TARANNUM) from the '80s, at least 4 au- dio cassettes were released, much in the style later used by Jagjit Singh for his work with KEHKESHAAN, a Doordarshan produc- tion. Some of the TARANNUM songs are memorable, for their words, the music, and most of all, the beautifully aging voice. 1. Kabhi Kitaabon Mein Phool Rakhna, Kabhi Darakhton Pe Naam Likhna Hamein Bhi Hai Yaad Aaj Tak Woh, Nazar Se Harf-E-Salaam Likhna 2. Zaraa Si Der Mein, Barson Ka Dostaana Lage Woh Ajnabi Hai, Ta-aalluq Magar Puraana Lage 3. Raat Phaili Hai Tere Surmai Aanchal Ki Tarah Chaand Nikla Hai Tujhe Dhoondhne Paagal Ki Tarah

Surkh Patton Ki Tarah, Log Ude Jaate Hain Shehr Bhi Ab To Nazar Aata Hai Jangal Ki Tarah Outside of TARANNUM, there were others. I recall a Qateel Shifai ghazal that I did not much care for, but for Noorjehan's rendi- tion of it: 4. Dekhne Ko Hamein Wo Khwaab Mile Soch Kar Bhi Jinhe Sawaab Mile And then there are the movie songs. In a RARE GEMS release, Noorjehan sings some true classics. This is as good a time as any to pay homage to her first really popular song for Ghulam Haider, a Punjabi theme from the Punjabi movie GUL-E-BAKAAVLI (the song goes something like "Shaana Jawaaniyaan Maane"), the 1939 hit that started it all. I like the RARE GEMS release mainly for all the DUPATTA songs it features, particularly "Main Ban Patang Ud Jaaoon" - a treat. In the early '50s, it was common for South Indian music makers to look to the North for eclectic inspiration. I was pleasantly surprised to find the T.S. Bhagwati song "Poomaalai..." from PARAASHAKTI (Shivaji Ganesan's first movie ever). The composer is R. Sudarsanam, and the song is a direct port of "Saanwaria Tohe Koi Pukaare" from Feroze Nizami's DUPATTA. Wonder if she has done any music lately. cheers vish

RMIM Archive Article "185".

Remembering Vocalist Shamshad Begum

Posted by: Satish Subramanian[54] (subraman@cs.umn.edu) .

Author: Saeed Malik

Strange are the vicissitudes of life, especially the ups and downs in the world of showbiz that those artistes who used to bask in the sunshine of glory, glamour and fame, were forgotten soon after their eclipse from the chart of popu- larity. Ever since the advent to talkies (sound motion pictures) in the sub-continent, many heart-throbs of the millions have now slipped into historical oblivion, and very few among music buffs remember those glittering stars of yesteryears whose glow once brightened the entire firmament of showbiz. Vocalist Shamshad Begum, whose sparkling melodies used to cast hypnotic spells on music buffs and movie-goers some 35 years ago, in now languishing in the murk of obscurity in a Bombay suburb. Forgotten by the movie moghuls, composers and cine-goers, the septuagenarian crooner is spending the even- ing of her life almost unnoticed. Shamshad Begum ruled the roost, first at Lahore and later at Bombay, when Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhonsle were not even introduced in the filmworld. She was the first female singer who assumed the status of a legend during her lifetime. With the help of her highly individualistic and charisma sonic personality, glow and a certain vivacity in her voice, she became the most sought-after female playback singer in the late 30s, 40s and 50s. It was on Dec 16, 1937, when radio made its debut from Lahore and so did Shamshad Begum. Singing solos and duets with Umrazia Begum (who later became Mrs. Ghulam Haider), the Amritsar-born Shamshad Begum captivated the hearts of listeners with the enchanting depth of her voice which then had no parallel. When she was in her teens, she shifted from Amritsar to Lahore where she soon became the first playback singer ever to lend her voice for the movies produced in Lahore. The then AIR Lahore helped her in penetrating the world of movies as frequent broadcasting of her songs induced music directors to use her voice for film songs. Shamshad Begum also recorded naats and devotional songs for a couple of gramophone recording companies which where then located in its Bakshi Market of Anarkali, Lahore. Lahore-based composer Ghulam Haider used her voice skillful- ly in some of his earlier films, mostly in Punjabi. The songs "Kankaan deyaan faslaan pakkiaan nain", when recalled, still create nostalgic fondness among senior denizens. Another composition of Master Ghulam Haider for which Shamshad Begum lent her voice was a "aya, hai bulaawa mujhe darbar-e-nabi se", which became very popular in the late 30s. When the late Masterji shifted to Bombay in 1944, Shamshad Begum went with him as a member of his team. Both of them rose to heights of fame in the film capital of India. In 1944, when Mehboob Khan launched his historical venture, "Humayun", Shamshad Begum's voice was used by Master Ghulam Haider for the recording of that movie's songs. The song "nainaan bhar aaye neer" sung by Shamshad, became a super hit. That was the time when Amirbai Karnataki was considered number one playback singer in Bombay, and a majority of ac- tresses used to croon songs picturised on them. With the in- troduction of Shamshad Begum in the filmworld in Bombay, contemporary composers almost fell over each other in book- ing her for the recording of their songs. For almost three decades, Shamshad Begum reigned supreme in the world of film music in the subcontinent. Frontline com- posers like Master Ghulam Haider, Naushad Ali, O.P.Nayyar, C. Ramachandra used Shamshad Begum's voice which was then regarded as one of the guarantees for the success of a film. The stark, almost unbearably tender "Ek tera sahara" (Ghulam Haider in the film "Shamaa"), the buoyant sophistication of the song "Nainaa bhar aye neer" (Master Ghulam Haider in "Humayun"), the open sadness of the song "Duniya badal gayi" (Naushad Ali in "Babul), the sparkling vivacity of "Kajra mohabbat wala" (O P Nayyar in "Qismat"), and the pathetic beseeching of a lover in "Ye afsaana nahi zaalim" (Naushad Ali in "Dard") are some of the extremely pungent reminders of Shamshad Begum's sonic versatility. Her other popular songs

54Source: Muslim, Apr 26, 1996

included "Kabhi aar kabhi paar laaga teer-e-nazar", "Reshmi salwar kudtaa jaali ka", "Bachpan ke din bhula na dena", "Chaman mein rahkar bhi", which still retain their freshness. With the wide range of her voice, Shamshad's command over her vocal resources sounded complete.

---------- Also in his book on Lata Mangeshkar, Raju Bharatan mentions how Shamshad Begum got a raw deal from various music directors. He cites instances where Shamshad Begum helped composers get a foothold in the world of films, but who later left her to back Lata (or Asha) as their primary singer. Some of these composers include, Naushad, C.Ramachandra, Madan Mohan, and O P Nayyar. - bye satish

RMIM Archive Article "260".

Suraiya - A Voice from the Past

Posted by: Neha Desai[55] (http://www.feminaindia.com)

Author: Sheila Vesuna

Meeting Suraiya was like taking a walk back in time. There was a time when traffic jams at Marine Drive (Mumbai) were caused not due to a long line of cars, but because of a young charismatic actress whose melodious voice had cast a spell on thousands of young Indians. Entering her home at Krishna Mahal on Marine Drive today, instantly transports you into another age and time. "I WAS 12 AND LOOKED LIKE MUMTAZ MAHAL!" Suraiya's career as an actress began as a child artiste. "One day, my 'mamoo' (maternal uncle) Zahoor, who was a popular villian in films, took me along to watch the shooting of Prakash Pictures' 'Taj Mahal'. There, I met the producer, Nanubhai Vakil, who felt that my face was ideally suited for the character of young Mumtaz Mahal and asked my uncle if I could do the film. My mother and grandmother agreed. So, I went off to Delhi to shoot at the Red Fort for 10 days. "And that was followed by one offer after another." And a star was born. SINGING WAS AN ACCIDENT "I was never trained in singing. Madan Mohan, who lived close by and Raj Kapoor once dragged me to participate in the children's programme on the All India Radio. Naushad sa'ab, who heard my voice on the radio, got in touch with me to sing for Kardar sa'ab's film, 'Sharda'. And I sang 'Panchi ja peeche raha hain bachpan mera', which was picturised on Mehtab. I was 11 years old then." "NARGIS ENVIED ME" "Frankly, I hadn't planned a career in films. I was just lucky to have got good roles. Nargis would always tell me, 'Somehow you get the best roles'," says Suraiya, modestly. "Most of my roles were simple, but the audiences loved them. And I was lucky to have got simple, melodious and easy to pick up songs to sing, and work with the best composers of the day like Naushad, Husnlal-Bhagatram and Anil Biswas. We didn't even dream of promo videos, ads and all the associated technical wizardry then. But we still caught the audience's imagination." THE CROWDS WENT SURAIYA-MAD And how! When 'Pyar Ki Jeet' was released, it drew crowds outside Suraiya's house that had to be controlled by posting an inspector and four constables outside her house. "When I went for the premiere of the movie 'Badi Bahen', there was such a big crowd outside! As I walked into the theatre, they pulled at my clothes. There was a lathi charge and people were injured. I stopped going for premieres thereafter." "DEV SAVED MY LIFE" No Suraiya interview can be complete without a reference to the Dev Anand-Suraiya love story. While Dev Anand himself went on to marry Kalpana Kartik and, later, to romance several other women, for Suraiya, it seems that love began and ended with Dev Anand. "We were picturising a song in a boat right in the middle of the river, when the boat overturned and we found ourselves flounder- ing in the water. I didn't know how to swim. Dev brought me out of the water. I thanked him, saying, 'If you hadn't saved me, my life would have ended.' He retorted, 'If your life had ended, so would mine.' We were drawn to each other." "MY GRANNY WAS DEAD AGAINST DEV" "I worked with Dev in seven films. Inevitably, people started talking about our romance and my grandmother learnt of it. She was extremely angry because Dev was a Hindu and granny was very orthodox." "WE DECIDED TO ELOPE" The highlight of this romance was the plan the lovers made to elope. While shooting for 'Jeet', the director decided to film on location instead of erecting a set. Also part of the plan was the summoning of a real 'panditji' to get Dev and Suraiya married during the shot. They would then get into the car and drive away - all as part of the scene, but in reality escaping. "I BACKED OUT" Unfortunately, Suraiya's grandmother came to know of the plan. "Eventually, my grandmother succeeded in separating us. Dev was deeply hurt and offended by my lack of courage. But I was afraid for him. In retrospect, I don't think anything would have hap- pened if I'd been bold enough. But I was terrified of my grand- mother. And was heartbroken. But time is the greatest healer." A practical woman, Suraiya prefers not to be a prisoner of the past. She agrees that had she chosen one of the

55Source: Femina

many marriage proposals that came her way, life would have been different. But, she says, "Who can say what may have happened had I married? I've seen so many friends' marriages crumbling. I've been single and happy, living and doing the things I like, with a circle of close friends. But I'll admit that after my mother expired some years ago, I felt some amount of loneliness creep in." "PANDIT NEHRU COMMENDED ME" "I'd been a fan of Mirza Ghalib since childhood. And so when Sohrab Modi sent for my grandmother and discussed the role and other terms with her, I was thrilled. "It was a very simple film, made in three months. Yet, what an effect the film had! It was the first feature film to be awarded the President's Gold Medal. At a function in Delhi, Pandit Nehru, after watching the movie, said to me, 'Ladki, tumne kya unke (Mirza Ghalib) ghazalein gaayi. Tumne Mirza Ghalib ki rooh ko zinda kar diya.' For me, that was an award better than an Oscar." "MY TIME HAD COME" "I hadn't been keeping well and had collapsed with weakness dur- ing the shooting of the movie. I was forced to take a break and recuperate. During that time, I really enjoyed resting and realised how tired I was with work. I completed the films I had on hand and decided to call it a day. And I've never looked back." Incidentally, this legendary actress-singer still retains a lovely schoolgirlish lilt in her voice. Time, it seems, hasnt laid its hands on it. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "367".

Suraiya - for the sake of love

Posted by: Neha Desai[56]

Author: Lata Khubchandani

For the Sake of Love The question of free will has remained an open one through the ages, does destiny rule our lives or do we shape our destiny - this question comes up again as one rewinds to the life of the singing sensation of the 40s and 50s - Suraiya. She seemed to have been introduced into the film industry at a time when she was much too young to decide what she wanted from life. Once there, she worked very hard under the vigilant eye of her grandmother and reached a position where she commanded respect, affection and awe. She had never been trained to sing, nor did she have an overwhelming love for singing. It was just that she was a quick learner. "Her voice was that of the girl next door. It was homely voice and unsophisticated. One you could identify with it," comments Music director Naushad Ali. Today, Suraiya refuses all offers to sing or perform on stage. "I haven't sung a note since I retired from films," she says. Having retired, Suraiya has never shown any desire to return. She wants to make up for all that time she had to spend working, getting up early for shootings and never being able to do what she liked. She wants to even out those years of discipline when she was at the top. Suraiya's life took a turn when she got her priorities mixed up at a crucial time. Dev Anand, the only man she had ever loved, proposed to her and asked her to give up acting. She hesitated a little too long; only she knew how hard she had worked to reach the top. Dev accused her of being too fickle, of caring more for her career than for him and that was the end of their fabled love story. But nothing about Suraiya suggested then or now that she was a career-oriented person. Today, as she lives alone, she is known for her good nature, and lively sense of humour. One wonders whether it was this same person who had second thoughts about marriage when it was pitted against her career? Perhaps she has asked herself this same question before. Legends have a way of growing larger than life, larger than reality and this happens when they become victims of their own images. We've had a tragedienne like Meena Kumari whose tragic persona became so important to her that it spilled over into her personal life and she could not detach herself from it. We've heard stories of Madhubala whose laughing, ever beautiful image was so much part of her personality that she could not come to terms with her illness. And we have a Suraiya who remains a recluse for no better reason than "I'm too fat now. I want people to remember me as I used to be." And people remember her as a lively nymphet, always ready to burst into laughter, a quality she retains even today. Music director Naushad Ali takes one down the years to talk about this artiste who entered the industry too young and left it very early. "Suraiya was ruled by a martinet of a grandmother who took complete charge of her life, accompanied her everywhere and never let her out of her sight - she was completely responsible for making Suraiya what she was". "We were making a film for Prakash pictures and needed a girl to play the heroine's younger sister, someone who could sing as well. The singer G M Durrani suggested Suraiya and one day a young girl dressed in a frock holding her grandmother's hand walked into the office. The director of the film C M Lohar asked me to take her audition. The girl had no training in music but she was very intelligent. She sang two songs for the film Station Master. One was a chorus yeh rail hamare ghar ki chuk chuk, and a solo number saajan ghar aaye. It was her debut, both as an actress and as a singer. She was just nine years old. I introduced her to A R Kardar, in whose film Nayi Duniya, she gave playback music for the first time. Then came Sharda, another film by Kardar. The heroine was Mehtaab and Suraiya gave playback for the song Panchi ja piche raha hai bachpan mera. Her playback singing for Mehtaab became so successful that people thought it was Mehtaab herself singing." For Naushad, she sang in films like Dillagi, Dastaan, Dil-e-Nadaan, Dard, Deewana and Anmol Ghadi. According to Naushad, "Suraiya was gifted with a naturally melodious voice. Her tonal quality was very good. Her singing was non-professional, but

56Source: indiaxs.com

she learn't fast. In those days, music directors composed songs to the artiste's range so that the voice wouldn't appear distorted. It is unfortunate that she retired too early." Says co-singer Talat Mahmood, "Even if she had become a little heavy, she should not have given up singing. I made two films Maalik and Waris with her and we shared a fantastic rapport. Waris even celebrated a silver jublee, a rare thing in those days and our songs from those films still remain very popular. She was as good a singer as she was a human being." Today she follows a leisurely lifestyle says a friend. Repeated attempts to meet her are met with rebuffs from a "female watchdog" who seems to guard her. She refuses to even come on the phone and almost never meets the press. Her pleasantly worded excuse is always the same - that she doesn't want to be seen as she looks now. But she refuses to shed those extra kilos even for the sake of her image. But no talk of Suraiya would be complete without a mention of Dev Anand and their love affair. Suraiya Jamal Sheikh met Dev Anand during the filming of Vidya. She was then an established star and he a very raw newcomer. But she found him sedate, cultured and very handsome. It was during the shooting of the song Jaayi khushi ki duniya, hansti hui jawaani in which she had to rest her head on Dev's shoulder and realised that no one had made her feel this way before. However, the relationship was resented by her family. Suraiya did not know how to deal with pressures around her; her family insisted she have nothing to do with Dev, while he insisted that she marry him and retire from films. As she was not yet an adult, her uncle threatened to have Dev arrested on grounds of her being a minor, if she contemplated marrying him. The fear that they'd harm Dev, coupled with the thought of giving up everything she'd done to reach the top, made her waver. It was this hesitation that made Dev doubt that she had ever loved him. Mounting family pressures made her give up all thought of marrying the one man she cared for. Dev Anand however prefers to retain those beautiful moments in his private file. Says he, "We were involved, so I'm obviously going to say only good things about her. When I entered the industry she was already a big star. She was a lovely person and a very good singer. Today when I look back, it seems that time has gone by in a jiffy. Suraiya used to laugh a lot and her singing was effortless. Anil Biswas, was a very good music director in those days. I remember he'd give her the lines and she'd pick up the tune immediately and sing. I'm out of touch with Suraiya now, but I remember meeting her sometime back. She's put on a lot of weight and she wears a lot of jewellery. I have good memories of her, she was very nice but she was always surrounded by this retinue of people." Born in Lahore, in June 1929, Suraiya is young by today's standards, but this singing star who delighted the audiences for such a long time refuses to come out of hiding. She held her own among stalwarts like Nur Jehan, Khurshid, Zohra Bai, Amirbai and others without the benefit of any music training. She has given us numbers like Nain Diwane, the outstanding Woh paas rahe ya door rahe, frothy numbers like Kise maloom tha and the beautiful Nuktachin hai ghame dil. Her career spanned a little over two decades but she has left behind a vast body of work for audiences to delight in. One wonders what it was she gained from her association with the industry. A broken love affair, a life of loneliness; her mother and grandmother passed away, the rest of her family migrated to Pakistan and today she lives alone. Her strength, her courage, her good temper and generosity (she acted with newcomers when she herself was at the top, when she could pick and choose her co-stars) make her a human being above the average. Whatever destiny willed for her, she accepted - and today she has become a legend in her own right. Lata Khubchandani

RMIM Archive Article "261".

Mubarak Begum: A Forgotten Voice

(http://www.feminaindia.com)

Author: Lata Khubchandani[57]

--------- She has worked with most composers of her time, yet never had the chance to make it to her zenith. Today, she remains a distant memory MUBARAK Begum didn't get many opportunities to get her voice heard. Today, as she looks back at a career which didn't quite take off in the real sense of the term, she says, "I've done only 25 per cent of the work I could have. My wings were cut before I even began to fly. And I've never been able to understand why - since I was a niche singer, there was no question of treading on anyone else's toes. But just as I was getting popular, composers stopped calling me for work. Finally, I reached a stage when I had no work at all." Now, as she waits for some miracle to release her from what has become a life of drudgery, Mubarak Begum looks back fondly on her days of struggle - when life still held out that most tempting bait, hope. FILMS WERE A PASSION "As a child, I loved watching movies. Though originally from Rajasthan, we lived in Sahrangpur Darwaza (Ahmedabad). I remember, whenever I knew somebody was going to watch a film, I'd throw a tantrum - I wanted to go, too! So, my 'taya' (paternal uncle) would take me, even though once the lights went off and the film began, I'd promptly fall asleep! When my family moved to Mumbai, Suraiya was very popular. I'd see her films, imitate her voice and sing all her numbers to perfection. "Then I started learning music from Abdul Karim Khan's (a well known classical singer of the time) nephew, Riyazuddin Khan. I learnt just enough of classical music to be able to do 'riyaz' - I was told that too much classical training made one's voice unfit for light music. "Around this time, I started singing on All India Radio (AIR) and, apparently, had a large audience. Among them was Rafique Ghaznavi Khan 'sa'ab', remembered as the man who said the famous words (that accompany the logo of Mehboob Khan Films) - 'Muddayi lakh bura chahe to kya hota hai, wohi hota hai jo manzoore khuda hota hai'. He is the music composer of 'Taqdeer', Nargis's debut film." MIKE FRIGHT STRIKES! "Anyway, Khan 'sa'ab' liked my voice and asked me to sing for him. I was very raw then, and was made to rehearse at a recording studio at Tardeo (Mumbai). But when I stood before the mike, I just couldn't sing! Agajani Kashmiri, the well known writer, was also present and kept saying, 'Go for another take.' The others asked him, 'What take? She can't sing!' We (my father and I) returned home. But, at the time, I felt no regret. I was too naive to really understand the importance of it all. "My father was very keen that I enter the music world, and con- stantly did the rounds of producers' offices. That's how I met Shyamsunder - a popular composer in those days - who introduced me to Ram Daryani. He was making 'Badi Bahen' at the time and promised to give me two songs in the film. But history repeated itself - I was made to rehearse (this time in Shree Sound Stu- dios); and I got so frightened, I couldn't sing!" OVERCOMING MY FEAR "This struggle continued till I met Yakub, who was making 'Aayiye', the music of which was composed by Shaukat Dehlvi, who did the popular 'Nagma'. I remember going to Eastern Studios at Worli (Mumbai), where Allaudin, Yakub's brother, was the recor- dist. And there, for the first time, we recorded without a hitch! The song was a solo, 'Mohe aane lagi angrayi... aaja aaja balam'. I also sang a duet (with Lata Mangeshkar) for the same film, 'Aao chalein, chalein sakhi wahan'. "Meanwhile, I continued meeting composers, hoping to get work. But some of them refused to hear me. When I went to meet S. D. Burman, he said, 'Polish your voice, polish your voice' without listening to my voice. "My next film

57Source: Femina

was 'Phoolon Ke Haar', for which I sang eight songs. Composed by Hasraj Behl to the lyrics of D. N. Madhok, Verma Malik and Indivar, the film had Geeta Bali and Nigar Sul- tana in the lead roles. A few small films followed, for which I got paid as little as Rs. 150." MY BIGGEST PROJECT "Then, I landed my biggest project, 'Daayra', thanks to Harish- chandra Rao, its composer. I'd just finished recording a song for Jamaal Sen, a relative of today's composers Dilip and Sameer Sen. I believe Harishchandra Rao had tried to get other singers, but they'd stood him up. So, he took me to meet Kamal Amrohi. "Busy recording with Meenu Katrak, Kamal 'sa'ab' sent along a representative to decide on my voice. That's how I got to sing for 'Daayra'. The theme song, 'Devta tum ho mera sahara, maine thamma hai daaman tumhara' was a duet between (Mohammad) Rafi and me. I sang other numbers too - 'Jali jo shama, deep ke sang jaloon', for example. I had about seven songs in the film, which had Meena Kumari and Nasir Khan in the lead. Unfortunately for me, 'Daayra' was an utter flop. I was extremely disappointed. SONGS WERE WRITTEN FOR ME! "Around this time, I was called to sing for Naushad 'sa'ab's' film 'Shabab'. When I got there, I found all I had to sing was a few lines in a child's chorus. The song was Rafi's 'Mehelon mein rehne wale, hamein tere dar se...'. "I was upset - it was such a big production and all I was getting to sing was a few lines! Then, they offered to give me a full song if I sang this one. I agreed. "After which, S. D. Burman 'da' suddenly called me over to visit him at Dev Anand's office in Juhu (Mumbai). He was composing for the film 'Devdas' and wanted me to sing the number 'Woh na aay- enge palatkar, unhein lakh hum bulaayein...'. The song had just about two lines, which had to be repeated over and over again. "Sahir Ludhianvi, the lyricist, who was sitting there, heard me and said, 'I'll give you a full song.' That's how the song finally had an 'antara' and 'asthayi'. Burman 'da' was very pleased and praised me. All I could remember at the time was how he'd refused to even listen to me when I'd approached him ear- lier. "I had the opportunity of singing in every film made by Bimal Roy. 'Hale dil sunayenge...' ('Madhumati') became very popular. Initially, even this song was just one stanza long, till Shailen- dra 'sa'ab' told me he'd write the full lyrics and the song grew in length. "That song was recorded with only three musicians - a sarangi player (Pt. Ram Narain), a 'tabalchi' and a harmonium player. Composer Salil Choudhry heard it, as he was entering the room, and was very thrilled! MY MOST POPULAR NUMBER "I've sung in practically all of Kidar Sharma's films too. For one, whose production composer was Snehal Bhatkar, I sang 'Kabhi tanhayiyon mein yoon, hamari yaad aayegi...' At the recording, Kidar Sharma sat with his eyes closed till the song was done, and then got up and gave me some money. When I hesitated, Snehal Bhatkar told me, 'Take it. Whoever he gives money to makes a name.' The film was 'Hamari Yaad Aayegi', with Tanuja. "At the time, I was told the song was a background number (those days background numbers didn't figure on records). But on a visit to Pakistan, I found people talking about this song. Then, I realised that Kidar 'sa'ab' had got a record made after all. This song has been one of my most popular numbers. It still is. MY REPERTOIRE GREW "Composers Shankar-Jaikishen were becoming very popular around this time, and I've always been a very ardent fan of theirs. I've always respected them for their originality - they were like no one else. I sang for 'Hamrahi' with them - the song was a duet with Rafi 'sa'ab', 'Mujhko apne gale lagalo ai mere hamrahi...' I worked with them in 'Around The World' (a duet with Sharda, 'Yeh muh aur masoor ki dal...') and again in 'Arzoo' ('Jab ishk kahin ho jaata hai...' - a 'quwaali'). "I worked with Kalyanji-Anandji in 'Juari' ('Neend ud jaye teri chainse sone wale...') and in 'Yeh Dil Kisko Doon'. A song that scaled the heights of popular- ity was 'Hume dum daike souten ghar jaana...', which I sang with Asha Bhosle. Madan Mohan had me sing in 'Neend Humari Khwab Tumhare' ('Sakiya ek bhi to de...'). In 'Saraswati Chandra', I sang the number 'Vada humse kiya dil kisiko diya...' and in 'Kajal' - 'Agar tum na miloge to main yeh samjoongi...'. I had begun getting more and more work." SUDDENLY THERE WAS NO WORK! "Then my life did an about turn. For no reason, my songs would be recorded and then cut off from the film, like in the film 'Jab Jab Phool Khile', and again, in a number I recorded with Shobha Gurtu for Bappi Lahiri. Slowly, I realised that I was being edged out of the industry." By this

time, Mubarak Begum had sung with almost every composer and singer - she'd had duets with Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Geeta Dutt, Rafi, Mukesh, Talat Mehmood, Manna Dey... She'd sung for regional language films like in Sindhi ("It was ever so dif- ficult," she laughs, today , "to get the pronunciation right AND concentrate on the singing! But watching my co-singer, Talat Mah- mood, struggling too made me do my best"). Now, she sings for stage shows - "I have to survive," she says. TODAY... But listeners will never forget what she has sung, even if her repertoire hasn't been very large. She has some memorable numbers to her credit - Jan Nissar Akhtar's number for 'Susheela' with Talat Mahmood, 'Kuch ajnabi se aap hain, kuch ajnabi se hum...' or the one from 'Dagbabu', 'Ghir ghir aaye badarva kare, rang bhare ras bhare pyare pyare...' this industry where awards are two a penny, Mubarak Begum has received no recognition whatsoever for her work... "Forget appre- ciating talent with an award, we're not even invited for the functions any more. So completely have we been forgotten," says she, sadly. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "198".

Geeta Dutt

Posted by: Hemant Parikh[58] (parikh@ibm.net)

Author: Raju Bharatan (for most part)

------ She was the blithe spirit of our popular music. All the more so under the baton of O.P . Nayyar who owed his "Aar Paar" breakthrough to her. Here is a peep into GEETA DUTT's solo repertoire for this composer. On the occasion of her 22nd death anniversary falling on July 20,1994 a study by RAJU BHARATAN. Complied by Hemant Parikh. Who recommended O.P. Nayyar as a music director to Guru Dutt for "Baaz"? Inimitable Geeta Roy of course, when she was all set to become Geeta Dutt Which number arguably rates as the hottest tune composed by O.P. Nayyar- yesterday, today or tomorrow? Mera naam Chin-Chin-Choo, the Helen foot-tapper from "Howrah Bridge". What a grim irony that Mera naam Chin-Chin-Choo turned out to be Geeta's swan song for O.P. I turn the spotlight here on Geeta Dutt's solos for O.P Nayyar, since it is not my style to halve the anniversary credit by bringing in the singer's duets too. At twelve o'clock on July 20, we were into 22 years without Geeta Dutt. Yet this blithe spirit of our popular music has been in the public ear all these 22 years Geeta's vocal mystique, it is unique. Especially under the seductive baton of O.P. Nayyar. The story of their ear-riveting association be-gins with Dalsukh Pancholi's "Asmaan" in 1952, flopping like nobody's show business in the face of Geeta Roy's vocals in it; for O.P.Nayyar, being vibrant as vibrant could be. Vibrant in the shape of Pom pom pom baaja bole dholak dhin dhin dhin (the GE28021 record I had to beg, borrow or steal for Ameen Sayani to play during Binaca for birth play during anniversary), Arre kya hoon main na bahaar hoon, Dekho jaadoo bhare more naina and that stunner: Dil hai diwana jawaan hai zamana. "Asmaan" bombed so explosively that O.P. Nayyar switched wholesale to Asha Bhonsle for all the 12 songs of his next film, P.L. Santoshi's "Chham Chhama Chham". Characteristically, Geeta never held this against O.P., commending his name to Guru Dutt to score the music for the 1953 Geeta Bali - Guru Dutt starrer, "Baaz". And Guru Dutt shot the movie almost entirely on a ship. What memorable solos O.P. composed for Geeta to articulate while working for the first time with a creative director like Guru Dutt and a super heroine like Geeta Bali. Remembar Geeta Roy's Zara saamne aa zara aankh mila on Geeta Bali? And Geeta Roy rendering the very opposite style of tune in the very opposite style of scene that Geeta Bali, alone could take in her acting stride; Ai dil ai diwane aag laga li kyun daaman mein. There were, in the same "Baaz", other numbers that the listener of taste recalls to this day as Geeta-O.P. at their brightest; Maanjhi albele chalo re haule haule, Ai watan ke nauja waan jaag aur jaga ke chal, Taare chaandni afsaane samaan bahaar hai suhane and Jaage panchchi savera hua. What composing by O.P., what vocalising by Geeta! Yet "Baaz" failed. But not the vocals of Geeta or the tunes of O.P. In fact, the solo numbers scored by O.P. Nayyar for Geeta Roy in "Asmaan" and "Baaz" have become collectors items in the 22 years Geeta has been off but never away. As for Geeta-O.P.'s "Aar Paar", its impact is still fresh in our ears. For "Aar Paar" (1954) was the breakthrough film for Guru Dutt and O.P.Nayyar alike. It is well to remember that Geeta Roy, in posing an early threat to Lata, had broken through long before Guru Dutt and O.P. Nayyar found public acceptance. Yes, if the Mangeshkar was already number one by 1953, she was "first only among three equals". Lata, Geeta and Shamshad Be-gum. Asha Bhonsle came into the reckoning only after these three and was still struggling in 1953. But Our theme song here is Geeta going solo in the sultry custody of O.P. And the Geeta solos for O.P. in "Aar Paar" may, each, be pinpointed as an ever green; Yeh lo main haari piya, Babuji dhire chalna pyaar mein, Hoon abhi main jawaan and that heart stopper on the obverse of the N50848 Sun sun sun sun zaalima record: Jaa jaa jaa jaa bewafaa. The Sun sun sun sun zaalima duet was a straight lift, but Jaa jaa jaa jaa bewafaa was a mood creation by O.P. - epitomised by Geeta in that antithetic idiom that so set off her vim and vitality as a joie-de-vivre performer. We had a fresh insight into this "other"

58Source: various

mood of Geeta as, in "Mr & Mrs 55", without the slightest sense of inhibition, she took on C.H. Atma, under the same O.P., and invested Preetam aan milo with her own vocal persona. Saroj Mohini Nayyar, as the one who wrote the Atma original, was shaky about this Geeta edition. But Saroj Mohini could feel shaky only until Geeta's voice came over after that she knew she was listening to a live enactor, not a mere singer. May be Madhubala's visage was half the battle won. But can you imagine Madhubala without Geeta in such "Mr & Mrs 55" solo as Thandi hawa kaali ghata? Geeta had this gift of putting her vocal stamp even on Madhubala! On Madhubala as on Cuckoo - Neele aasmaane. O P. Nayyar's composing, at this make-or-break stage in this career, had a swinging rhythm that was best captured by mood specialist Geeta Dutt. Look at the way Geeta put over for O.P., in "Musafirkhana" that charming romantic solo on Shyama; Dil dee daala nazrana. It was a simple tune equally simply put across, that is why it was so lucidly picked up by the simple ear and the simple mind. What was "Choomantar" but a Johny Walker - Shyama - Karan Dewan extension of "Musafirkhana". Before you could say "Chhoomantar", Geeta had established her O.P. sway on your heart with Jab baddal lehraaya jiya jhoom jhoom ke gaaya, Gori gori raat hai taaron ki baaraat hai and Raat nashili rang rangili mast hawa. What a shame these carefree re- minders of our youth are numbers so little heard today. Oh, but I have missed out on a film that is current soft- drink coin: "Miss Coca Cola". The Pepsi people could never have found a vocal match for Geeta, had she been living to vivify the fizz in Coca-Cola. Geeta Bali had yet to wed Shammi Kapoor when she was his "Miss Coca Cola" in the film of that name! And how can we forget from "Miss Coca Cola" such Geeta-O.P. ear-catchers as Sach sach bol nahin batiyaan bana, Teri kaafir nigah kar gayi dil ko tabaah and Ban dhadkan kajra naina dole re. We rarely get to hear these numbers, will Vividh Bharati and Doodarshan oblige, now that the Coca-Colonisation of India by the USA is in full swing? "C.I.D", of course, was the Raj Khosla directed Guru Dutt film that brought O.P. Nayyar zooming on as a live challenger to Shanker-Jaikishan in the year (1956) in which that swiftly advancing duo bagged their maiden Filmfare Best music award for "Chori Chori". All the film award entries, I remember, were counted in my editorial charge in the Times Of India building and Lata-Manna Dey, at their best in "Chori Chori", just about managed to edge out Geeta-Rafi at their best in "C.I.D". Shanker-Jaikishan, too, needed to be at their most innovative to snatch that 1956 filmfare award from O.P. Nayyar, who was to beat this duo to it the following year with "Naya Daur" - without Geeta Dutt! With Geeta Dutt, in "C.I.D", O.P. had but one solo - but what a solo! The spell of Jaata kahaan hai diwane abides. Its Kuchch tere dil mein fifi kuchch mere dil mein fifi punchline by Geeta represented O.P. Nayyar's trendy counter to S.D. Burman's Tip-tip-tip-tip-tip-tip-tip effect given by the same Geeta Roy on Geeta Bali in the Dekh ke akeli mohe beguiler of "Baazi". There was a raging in controversy in the letters' section of Screen about why Geeta's Jaata kahaan hai diwane was deleted from "C.I.D." Which is the Geeta number you would choose from between O.P.'s Jaata kahaan hai diwane and S.D.'s Dekh ke akeli mohe? The choice lies between Geeta Roy and Geeta Dutt! When he bagged "Mr. Lambu", for O.P. Nayyar it was a dream come true, for the film gave him his first opportunity to compose for Suraiya. At the time, I remember expressing my disappointment to O.P. for the way he had scored Suraiya's two solos in "Mr..Lambu" as Yaad karun tori batiyaan and Soyi hai kahaan jaakar taqdeer mohabbat ki. But today these Suraiya numbers sound pleasant enough. As pleasant as Geeta's lone solo in "Mr. Lambu", Aaj jo hum tum mil gaye pyaar mein? Well, for Geeta, Suraiya was no competition. Even Lata was not, for the word "competition" did not exist in Geeta's vocal lexicon. That is why Geeta could pack her all even into a below-grade crimusical like "Shrimati 420". There were no fewer than three Geeta-O.P. solos in "Shrimati 420" and each was part of a Nayyar wave that then swept our cinema: Meri zindagi ke humsafar phenkna yahaan bhi ek nazar, Hum ko chhod ke kahaan jaaoge saiyyan and Badi rangili zindagi hai ha seen hai dillagi hai. What a great idea it would be if HMV issued a Cassette made up exclusively of Geeta's OP solos in the 1952-60 phase. For come 1961 and Geeta sadly, is out of O.P. Nayyar's recording room. Which then is the timeless number with which Geeta Dutt came closest to matching her own Mera naam Chin-Chin-Choo? We are talking of O.P. Nayyar. so I say it is Chor lootere daaku in "Ustad". I know Asha successfully grappled with every sironise twist and turn in an O.P. tune in later years, but Chor lootere daaku came at a time when Geeta alone could do that for O.P. Nayyar. And whether the number

be Chor lootere daaku or Mera naam Chin-Chin-Choo, Geeta had the God given gift of sounding sensuous without sounding salacious. Geeta alone had this knack of never making even an O.P. tune sound voluptuous. I concede Asha took over from Geeta in style, yet the fact remains that there is not one O.P. tune you can recall that Geeta coarsened . "It is sad therefore that a sizzler like Chor lootere daaku represents the phase (1957) in which O.P. Nayyar began the business of banishing Geeta by having ears only for Asha. The solos and duets alike of Geeta, I find, are severely rationed by O.P., starting with "Ustad". In O.P. chartbusters like "Tumsa Nahin Dekha" and "Naya Daur", even in Nayyar quickies of this period like "Hum Sub Chor Hain" and "Qaidi", it is Asha almost all the way, barring that almost mandatory interpolation by Shamshad Begum. With "Phagun", the Madhubala-Bharat Bhooshan all-Pilu musical coming at the fag-end of 1957, O.P.'s obsession with Asha is complete - all 11 songs in the film carry her vocals. This I emphasise not as a criticism of Asha, who came up the hard way, but merely as OP not being any longer pre-pared to entertain the idea of resummoning his one time chief artiste, Geeta Dutt. This was when Geeta made that famous phone call to O.P. to ask: "What have I done to you that you now don't send for me at all?" How does O.P. feel about such Asha concentration and Geeta inattention today? "Very guilty" says O.P. "But love knows no reason, only a season!" Even in such a season, in "Duniya Rang Rangeeli" in which there were six songs by Asha tuned by O.P., Geeta Dutt left a vocal mark, all her own in the sole solo she got in the film: Kya yeh tu ne kiya ishara. From such an occasional Geeta crumb, I conclude that O.P. at times suffered from pricks of conscience. It was the call of such a conscience that presumably made O.P. offer Geeta such solo sops in 1958 as Bach bach bach kahun sach sach sach in "Farishta" and Channda chaandni mein jab chamke kya ho aa mile jo koyi chham se in "Mujrim". Yet there was one film in 1958 in which O.P. Nayyar had to settle for Geeta Dutt as his main singer afresh. This, traumatically for Geeta, was the Waheeda Rehnnan Guru Dutt starrer: "Twelve O'Clock". We had here, hoon the still super-supple throat of Geeta three such O.P. lilters as Kaisa jaadu balam tum ne daara, Aji o suno to nahin tum ne humen pehchana and Arre tauba taurba yeh teri ada. Thus was the "Clock" chimingly turned back to "Twelve" before Geeta Dutt disappeared from O.P. Nayyar's recording room. Asha Bhonsle went on to sing for O.P. Nayyar as many as 81 solo plus chorus-backed numbers, but the digits get reversed in the solo case of Geeta to 18. Yet what a watershed these 18 Geeta solos mark in O.P.'s career: O. P.Nayyar might have created some sort of a recording by getting Asha to figure in all songs of "Phagun", all 14 songs of "Basant", all 9 songs of "Hongkong", all 7 songs of "Mitti Mein Sona", all 6 songs in the case of each of three films: "C.I.D. 909", "The Killers" and "Pran Jaye Par Vachan Na Jaye". The Chain se hum ko kabhi aap ane jeene na diya collaboration of Asha-O.P. may have a pang and a tang all its own. Yet Asha Bhonsle, as a human being first and a imputative being after, will be the first, I know, to spare a Thandi thandi hawa poochche unka pata thought for a Geeta who hid her light under a bushel so that her husband's might shine the brighter . A husband who, when he went back to O.P. Nayyar for "Baharen Phir Bhi Aayengi", knew it had to be Asha it could not be his wife even for a tune right up Geeta's, alley like Koyi keh de keh de kehde zamane se jaa ke ki hum ghabra ke mohabbat kar baithe.... An Asha shraddhanjali to Geeta, is it not overdue, now that Ms. Bhonsle has sung like a champion for 22 years without any competition from Ms.Dutt? ----------

From the Record GEETA DUTT IN MEMORIAM ----------

This marvel of a musical montage will bring you bitter-sweet memories of bygone years. Bitter, because the voice that presents it is the voice of Geeta Dutt who is no more with us. And sweet, because sweetness was the keynote of her music. Geeta's was the voice that lent a rare sensitivity and poise, an uncanny grace and dignity, to every song she warbled, It had also in it a subtle blend of talent and imagination of originality and virtuosity - the kind of blend we find so beautifully reflected in the rich legacy of recorded repertoire she has left behind Indeed, her sudden death at 41 has left a void in the melody world that is hard to fill, . Born in a well-known family of Zamindars from East Bengal, now Bangla Desh, Geeta Dutt migrated to Bombay soon after partition in 1947, Timbre and tone were in her blood and before long did she blaze a new trail as a singer par excellence, Maestros of the eminence of S, D, Burman and O, P, Nayyar found her silken voice ideally

suited for films and harnessed it to best advantage, From then on, for almost two decades, Geeta had her sway over millions of her fans, singing as many as 5,000 songs in a variety of languages- from Bengali and Hindi to Punjabi, Marathi and even Gujarati Songs like Mera Sundar Sapna Beet Gaya and Tadbeer se bigdi hui, with their perennial appeal, are the finest examples of her eloquent musical expression Geeta Dutt s marriage in 1 953 with Guru Dutt, the versatile producer - director - -actor, was an event to remember in the world of film music. She lent her voice to almost all the films produced by her husband - like "Pyaasa", "Mr. and Mrs. 55", "Baazi", "Aar Paar", "C.I.D" , "Kagaz- ke- Phool" and "Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam". And it is sheer delight to hear these songs even today, This disc offers you the very epitome of her emotional world in all its varied facets of the little joys and sorrows that shaped her musical being. ----------

Addition By Hemant Parikh. ----------

(Source Raju Bharatan & Vandana Majumdar Articles)

Addition By Hemant Parikh.
(Source Raju Bharatan & Vandana Majumdar Articles)

Geeta Roy / Geeta Dutt
Died July 20, 1972 she was only 41. (Born 1931)

- 1952 "Asmaan" First O.P. Nayyar -Geeta Dutt combination film flopped.

- 1953 Geeta Roy suggested Music Director O.P. Nayyar's name to Guru Dutt for the film "Baaz" * ing Guru Dutt & Geeta Bali.

- 1953 She was among the first three equal famous singers 1) Lata Mangeshkar, 2) Geeta Dutt, 3) Samshad Begum.

- 1957 O.P. Nayaar never asked Geeta Dutt to sing for Bharat Bhusahan & Madhubala starrer "Phagoon".

- 1958 O.P. Nayyar called her for the film " Twelve ‘ O' Clock" *ing Guru Dutt, Waheeda Rahman.

- During the film "Pyaasa" Guru Dutt fell in love with Waheeda Rahman. Geeta could not face her Husband linked with other woman, She stayed up all night her friends suggested her to take alcohol.

- Guru Dutt stopped Geeta Dutt and Waheeda Rahman signing films out side his banner. Soon Geeta Dutt lived separately.

- Guru Dutt passed away in the year 1964 (10th October). It had been said that Geeta Dutt sold her Jewellery to pay Guru Dutt's artistes. Her house was auctioned. She started doing stage shows to support her kids.

- Like the doomed love story of the choti bahu in "Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam", both Meena Kumari and Geeta Dutt who had infused into the role with the haunting Na jaon saiya shoodake baiya became alcoholics themselves. Ironically like the legendery Meena Kumari Geeeta Dutt too finally sccumbed to the deadly cirrhosis of the liver in 1972.. Jo dusro ko khush kar gaye who khud khun ke aansoo pee gaye.

- Geeta Dutt sang 18 solo's for O.P. Nayyar

- Asha Bhonsle sang 81 solo's for O.P. Nayyar

- 1971 - Geeta Dutt sang her last song for the film "Anubhav" for the Music director Kanu Roy.

- Born in Zamindar Family East Bengal (Now the new Bangaladesh)

- She migrated to Bombay (Now Mumbai) in the year 1947.

- 1953 - She married Guru Dutt Padkukone.

- She too tried comiting suicide.

- Dev Anand introduced Geeta Roy to Guru Dutt at a party. They met again, when Geeta was recording Tadbeer se bigdi hui taqdeer bana le. Soon, Guru Dutt was madly in love with her. He wrote her long, love letters and they would go for quiet drives together.

- Geeta Dutt till today remains one of the most Beautiful female singers in the Indian Music Industry.

- Geeta Dutt sang most of her best songs for S.D.Burman and O.P. Nayyar. But she also sang for Madan Mohan, Shanker Jaikishan, Hemant Kumar, C. Ramchandra, Vasant Desai, Ravi, Chitragupa, Naushad & Kanu Roy.

- Geeta Dutt sang her most famous-duets with Mohammad Rafi. But she also sang with Asha Bhonsle, Lata Mangeshkar, Hemant Kumar, Talat Mahmod and Mukesh.

I hope this will paint picures in your mind about the legendry singer Geeta Dutt. If there is any corrections to be made please e-mail me. Happy reading.

--
Hemant Parikh (Music Fan)
parikh@ibm.net

RMIM Archive Article "262".

Rajkumari - Songs sung true

(http://www.feminaindia.com)

Author: Lata Khubchandani[59]

RAJKUMARI Dubey was just 10 years old when she recorded her first song for HMV in 1934. But she started her career as a stage artiste. She recounts, "Vijay and Shankar Bhatt of Prakash Pictures spotted me during one of my shows. They liked my voice and persuaded me to discontinue acting on stage, as it would spoil my voice. (In those days, there were no mikes and you had to shout to be heard!) So, I quit theatre and became an employee of Prakash Pictures, as an actress and singer.

INTO MOVIES AND MUSIC

My first film with them was a Hindi-Gujarati bilingual called 'Sansar Leela Nayi Duniya'. In those days, I often acted opposite Zakaria Khan (late actor Amjad Khan's father, whose screen name was Jayant). And I used to sing for popular music director, Lallubhai.

CHANGING TRACKS

I began getting fed up with having to keep a watch on my figure and decided to stick to just singing as a career. After I quit Prakash Pictures, I started playback singing for actresses like Ratnamala, Shobhna Samarth, etc. I sang a lot of Gujarati and Punjabi songs.

A BORN PROFESSIONAL

I never really had the opportunity to learn singing. But was very good at picking up what my composers taught me. They thought I was a trained singer! My family has always supported me - when I was an actress and singer. I married very late in life. My husband was from Benares (UP), where he spent a lot of his time (because he owned a shop there), while I was settled in Mumbai. Of course, he joined me later.

MY PEERS

I counted among my peers Shamshad Begum, Zohrabai, Juthika Roy, Zeenat Begum, etc. Our voices were very distinct - both Zohra and Shamshad had resounding voices with a high range, while mine was

---

59Source: Femina

very soft with a smaller range. I sang quite a few songs with Mukesh, the most popular being 'Mujhe sach sach batado kya, ke kab dil mein samaye the'. I did not get much opportunity to sing with Mohammad Rafi - mainly because Lata Mangeshkar was just getting popular at the time and, then, all of us took a backseat. In 'Anhonee', I sang with Lata Mangeshkar - the song was 'Zindagi badli'. Nargis had a double role, so I sang for one, while Lata Mangeshkar sang for the other. I sang with Nurjehan in 'Naukar'. While I never sang with KC Dey, I did sing songs composed by him, along with Manna Dey, his nephew.

AN ODE TO SAIGAL

I am a great fan of KL Saigal and Nurjehan. I had occasion to sing with the former in 'Bhakt Surdas' and remember him as a very charming person. I have never understood why people criticised him for his drinking, etc. So what if he felt he couldn't sing without drinking? It was his personal choice. I remember him telling me, 'Rajkumari'ji', I want to take you with me when I go from this world.'

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF GEETA AND KIDAR

In 'Bawre Nain', while singing for Geeta Bali, she'd come up to me and say mischievously, 'Look at me - my actions - and sing accordingly.' She was so full of life.

Kidar Sharma, the director, was one of the most talented men I've ever known. It was he who groomed Geeta Bali, Raj Kapoor, Mala Sinha and others. But from all his 'shishyas', I think only Geeta Bali managed to pick up the nuances of his teachings.

Kidar Sharma had his own way of showing his appreciation. If he liked something you did, he'd give you a two 'anna' coin. And, in his entire life, he must have given the coin to just three people - Geeta Bali, Raj Kapoor and myself. He treated me with a lot of respect. I sang in his Raj Kapoor-Madhubala starrer 'Neelkamal', 'Bawre Nain' and several other films.

MY FRIEND - ZOHRABAI

If I had a friend in the industry, it was Zohrabai. We shared many good times - going out together, visiting each other. I sang with her in 'Mahal'. When Kamal Amrohi was making the film, he said to me, 'Rajkumari, I need a voice that sounds like a boy's to sing with you.' I replied, 'Well, then get a boy.' He said, 'No, I need a female singer.' I first suggested Shamshad Begum, but he refused. Then, I suggested Zohrabai and that's how we sang the duet, 'Ye raat phir na aayegi, ye jawani beet jayegi' (1950).

I WISH I COULD SING NOW...

I think I was the only artiste who

never sang songs that weren't for films. Though there was a time when I was employed by HMV to sing some Gujarati songs. I was paid Rs. 400 per month and was supposed to do 12 songs a year.

I sung four background numbers in 'Pakeezah', of which the most popular was 'Nazariya ki maari mari mori guiyyan'. This song became so representative of the 'kotha'. It was also used in 'Mirch Masala' - the Naseeruddin-Smita Patil starrer and was played throughout the film (Naseer is shown listening to it over and over again).

I must say I enjoyed my career. In fact, even today, I wish I could sing now - I'm bored. But I suppose my days are over.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS...

It was such a beautiful time - when I started singing - the camaraderie, the affection and the respect we received! If I have any regret, it is that I didn't get an opportunity to work with Madan Mohan. I loved his music. I did sing for him once, but would have loved to do more work with him. But it never happened. In retrospect, I can say I've sung all types of songs - 'geets', 'qawwalis', 'bhajans', 'ghazals', happy songs, sad ones...

HER SWAN SONG

Practically, the last time one saw Rajkumari perform was when Nurjehan visited India and the TV programme 'Mortal Men, Immortal Melodies' was made. Rajkumari sang along with the other singers who had gathered to welcome the nightingale from Pakistan, evoking memories of an era gone by.

TODAY...

Till recently, Rajkumari has been performing on stage and on TV, having even travelled abroad to Holland and London. Even though 72, her reflexes are just as sharp as ever. You realise this is no ancient grandmother needing your sympathy but a woman who has become aggressive possibly because life hasn't always been fair to her. But even now, her voice has retained its sweetness...

OLD FRIENDS

I've worked with practically all the composers of my time - Khemchand Prakash, Ghulam Haider, Sajjad Hussain, Husnlal Bhagatram, Naushad, Anil Biswas, OP Nayyar, SD Burman, RD Burman and Khursheed Anwar. Among the composers I sang for, I think the late Sajjad Hussain was the most difficult - his compositions were intricate and his way of explaining very complex. Take, for example, 'Khel Khel Main' where I sang 'Koi kis tarha raaze ulfat chhupaye, aji raahein mili aur kadam dagmagaye'. Most other singers also found him very difficult. I also sang for OP Nayyar

in 'Aasman', picturised on Shyama, 'Piya aan sakhi mere nainan mein mori nindiya churaye'. In the early '70s, RD Burman called me and said, 'Here's a song which is just right for you' and, indeed, it was a pleasure to sing. The song was a 'bhajan' for Gulzar's 'Kitaab', picturised on Dina Pathak: 'Hari din to beeta sham hui, ab raat baki kataa de'.

RMIM Archive Article "250".

Suman Kalyanpur

Posted by: ADhareshwar@worldbank.org (Ashok)

Author: ADhareshwar@worldbank.org (Ashok)

---------- Suman Kalyanpur Part -I

---------- In getting a reading on Suman's quality output, it would be interesting to use some P-statistical criteria (kind of high-pass filter) and see if any song comes through: 1. Composed by an acknowledged maestro, known for great Lata songs. 2. Did not use Suman under duress (example of use under duress would be: the MD or the producer or the male singer for a duet had a tiff going with Lata at the time). Can't be sure of this criterion for the mid-60s when Rafi and Lata weren't singing together. 3. There should be Lata songs in the film. 4. Suman's songs should be picturized on the heroine. Please note, these criteria are by mo means necessary conditions for the emergence of a great Suman song! Most of her best songs violate one or more of these criteria. (I wonder if these conditions might, however, be sufficient for a great song! Gets into murky territory, such as whether a S-J composition meets the first criterion. :)) * Unfortunately, couldn't think of many songs that meet all the conditions! The clearest case that does meet them is the film 'Noorjehan', with music by Roshan and lyrics by Shakeel. Interestingly, the film has more songs by Suman (2) than Lata (1)! They are picturized on Meena Kumari. The Suman solo from the film is one of the finest ever for the singer:

sharaabi sharaabi ye saavan ka mausam

khudaa ki qasam khoobsoorat na hota

agar is me.n rang-e-mohabbat na hota Although it's from the late 60s, by which time Suman's voice had thickened and lost its earlier sweetness, Suman sounds very young and fresh here. As you are captivated by the song, from the relatively less open way of singing, you can tell it is not Lata. Looks like as clear-cut a case as we are ever going to get of an MD preferring Suman over Lata for a song. The other song in the film, by Suman and chorus, is also very nice:

aai baad-e-bahaari le ke dard jawaani

allah allah kitane pyaare din aa gaye Let me remark that the sole Lata song in the film is very good, as we woule expect from Roshan:

raat ki mehfil sooni sooni

aankh pur_nam, dil naakaam * The next song to meet all the criteria is the Mukesh-Suman duet from "Meri Soorat Teri Aankhen' (SDB, Shailendra): "ye kis ne geet chheDaa". Suman comes in for just this song, Lata handling the rest. * The final example is similar to the above. In 'Saathi', Naushad brought Suman for the duet with Mukesh "mera pyar bhi tu hai", but Lata for the other songs. I hope RMIMers will come with more examples that meet the criteria. * If we relax the conditions, other songs come through. In 'Dil Hi To Hai', Roshan has a lovely sad solo by Suman and a happy duet by Mukesh and Suman. Interestingly, both songs have very similar tunes!

yu.n hi dil ne chaaha thaa rona rulaana and

chura le na tum ko ye mausam suhaana

khuli vaadiyo.n me.n akeli na jaana. As far as I know, there are no Lata songs in 'Dil Hi To Hai.' * Then there is the wonderful Suman-Kamal Baarot duet that Roshan composed for 'Barsaat Ki Raat': "garajat barasat saawan aayo ri". I think, Suman's voice is on Shyama. Anyway, Lata is used for Madhubala and Shyama in the film. * Madan Mohan has this superb slow-paced Rafi-Suman duet in 'Jahan Ara':

baad muddat pe ye ghaDi aai

aap aae to zindagi aai

ishq marmar (?) ke kaam_yaab hua

aaj ek zarra bhi aafataab hua It does meet the other conditions, but the song is from the mid-60s and one doesn't know if the choice of Suman was forced. * Two of Khayyam's 60s films, 'Shagoon' and 'Mohabbat Isko Kehte Hain' have no Lata songs, but are loaded with Suman gems. Two topnotch Rafi-Suman duets from these films would head the hit parade:

parbato.n ke peDo.n par shaam ka baseraa hai

surmayi ujaala hai, chamkayi andhera hai ('Shagoon') and

Thehariye hosh me.n aa lu.n, to chale jaayiega (MIKH) I think these songs came in the no-Lata-Rafi-duets period, but I like the tunes and the singing so much that I have no incentive to speculate on how they would be with Lata. In any case, Khayyam used Suman for many solos in these films:

bujha diye hai.n khud apane haatho.n ('Shagoon'),

zindagi zulm sahi, jabar sahi, Gam hi sahi (") and

jo ham pe guzarti hai ....(muddled about words here) (MIKH). * You can read about the Suman K. gems composed by Ghulam Mohammad for his last film 'Shama', in the RJGK 32 answers post. * There are a couple of instances of very good Suman songs from MDs who perhaps used Suman because they had fallen out with Lata at that time. Two great Suman songs came from C. Ramchandra, perhaps the greatest MD for Lata songs, in a 1960 film, 'Aanchal.' One is a marvellous solo, which has two versions (lyrics by Pradeep):

saawariyaa re, apani meera ko bhool na jaana The other one is one of the best group-dance songs I have heard. It is sung by Asha, Suman K. and chorus:

naache re, naache re, naachere, raadha naache

sakhiyaa.n naache, gopiyaa.n naache

naache kanhaiyaa ke gaao.n me.n

sarbhar kar bijaliyaa.n paao.n me.n Another CR film of the same period was 'Amar Rahe Yeh Pyar' (incidentally, a very good film, with Nalini Jaywant, Rajendra Kumar, and Nanda), which had the following song, sung by Pradeep and Suman K.:

mai.n teri koi nahi.n re, beTa (Not a proper duet. Pradeep sings the prelude and Suman K., the main song.) My guess is that CR would have used Lata for these songs under normal conditions. * A similar case is perhaps SD Burman's 'Miya Biwi Raazi.' It has two exquitsite Suman K. solos:

khuli hai aankh magar, khwaab hai wahi ka wahi and

chhoDo, chhoDo more baiyaa.n, saaware "Baat Ek Raat Ki' with "na tum hame.n jaano" perhaps falls into this category also. * Finally, this intriguing song is from V. Shantaram's 'Ladki Sahyadri Ki' with music by Vasant Desai. The film is perhaps a dub from Marathi and the tune also has that flavour:

tohri ungali se krishna, kaise jhar rahi rakt ki ye dhaara ** In order to strike the really rich vein of Suman hits, one will have to abandon condition 1 above, and go for the relatively obscure MDs. I'll mention just a few favorites, but before that let me quickly dispose of the murky territory. I'm sure mediocre MDs like Chitragupta, S-J, L-P, K-A, Ravi, and Usha Khanna have a bunch of Suman hits; I'll leave it to the fans of these MDs to dig them up. (I'll offer to do Chitragupta. :)) *Nashad One of the earliest Suman K. (Suman Hemmadi then) songs I have heard is this duet with Talat from 'Darwaza' (1954, I think):

ek dil do hai.n talab_daar baDi mushkil hai

kashmakash me.n hai meraa pyar baDi mushkil hai. He later composed this catchy solo from 'Rooplekha':

tu ne churaai mere maathe ki bindiyaa

beimaan rasiyaa o beimaan rasiyaa *Babul One of the all-time great songs of Suman K. is this much-neglected gem from "Sara Jahaan Hamaara':

ye phoolo.n ka gajaraa, ye meraa singaar

ho koi leke aaya hai sapane hazaar

o phoolo.n ka gajaraa o o He also composed this delightful Manna Dey-Suman duet for 'Reshmi Rumaal':

aankh me.n shokhi, lab pe jaadu

chaal qayaamat, toba toba *Sardar Malik Here's an example which would meet all the conditions above, if we agree to consider him great, whcih he certainly was for this film, at least. Yes, the superb soundtrack is enriched by this lovely Suman song, slow- paced, contemplative:

likh de piyaa ka naam, sakhi ri He also composed a lovely Mukesh-Suman duet, of the calibre of the SDB and Naushad ones mentioned above, for 'Madan Manjari':

sun more rasiyaa, sun man basiyaa, chhoD ke ab nahi.n jaana

pyar nibhaaunga, dil se na jaaunga, mai.n to tera hi deewaana *Robin Bannerjee I am not sure I want to have anything to do with a film, with the title "Rocket Tarzan', except that surprisingly good songs can be lurking in any Hindi film. This one has one of the earliest songs penned by Yogesh GauD, where he seems to have drawn inspiration from Rajinder Krishan's "Adalat' song. Be that as it may, the song is an absolute beauty:

un ko ham se baDi shikaayat hai

pyar karanaa hamaari aadat hai I wanted to include this song in RJGK 28, but don't remember any stanzas! *Ajit Merchant A Manna Dey song from 'Sapera' did get included there. But the film is chockful of lovely Suman songs:

bairi chheD na aisi raag,

jis se laage dil ko aag.

????? kya hoga

o re piyaa, mora taDape jiya and

bolo bolo bolo piya, kyo.n liyaa mera jiya. Also a duet with Manna Dey:

raat ne gesu bikharaae, mera dil mujh ko taDapaae

kis ne chheena hai bolo mere chaand ko *Dattaram He certainly was better than his masters here. Witness the lovely solos:

beete hue din kuchh aise hi hai.n

yaad aate hi dil machal jaae ('First Love')

kehti hai jhuki jhuki nazar ('Zindagi Aur Khwab') and

itani baDi jahaa.n me.n apna bhi koi hota

ham bhi to muskurate, apana use banaate ('Dark Street') Ashok

---------- Suman Kalyanpur Part -II

In order to strike the really rich vein of Suman hits, one will have to abandon condition 1 above, and go for the relatively obscure MDs. I'll mention just a few favorites, but before that let me quickly dispose of the murky territory. I'm sure mediocre MDs like Chitragupta, S-J, L-P, K-A, Ravi, and Usha Khanna have a bunch of Suman hits; I'll leave it to the fans of these MDs to dig them up. (I'll offer to do Chitragupta. :)) Reason for following up on my own article is: I was roundly taken to task through e-mail by Arun Verma and Balaji for one particular inclusion in the above list of mediocre MDs. I must say no criticism ever felt sweeter! The choice of the word 'mediocre' was perhaps unfortunate. I had in mind MDs one league below SDB, CR, Naushad, et al. Plus, I had thought that ranking Chitragupta ahead of Shankar-Jaikishan was heresy enough for RMIM! :) But, no! Perhaps, as Ajay Nerukar said "your campaign has created the impression that you rate him highly, hence the surprise, shock, amazement and disbelief." I stand chastized and here goes: Perhpas the most interesting Chitragupta film, from the point of view of Suman K. songs, is 'Main Shadi Karne Chala.' It has Suman K. as the main female singer and no Lata songs. Intriguingly, it is of the same vintage as 'Main Chup Rahungi' where all the female songs are by Lata. 'Main Shadi Karne Chala' is an IS Johar, Saeeda Khan starrer, with lyrics by Majrooh. Has that rarity, a Rafi/Suman tandem song:

jazbaa-e-dil jo salaamat hai, to insha allah Nice song, but I think more popular Suman solo from the film was picturized on Mumtaz or Praveen Choudhury:

mai.n hu.n akeli kis kis ko samajhaoo.n haai rabba (Is the continuation "dil naadaa.n, dil maasoom, kya hoga, or am I mixing up songs?) The most ambitious effort on behalf of Suman K. was perhaps the duet with Rafi:

jab se ham tum, bahaaro.n me.n

ho baiThe gum, nazaaro.n me.n

jaise ye zindagi, jaage aa.nkho.n kaa khwaab hai Very nice song, but interestingly, as it turned out, it got upstaged by its tandem, which was picturized on the many (six actually!) side pairs in the film. The tandem duet was sung by Mukesh and Kamal Barot and was by far the more popular of the two on the radio. For 'Adhi Raat Ke Baad', Chitragupta composed the Rafi-Suman duet:

bahut hasee.n hai.n tumaari aa.nkhe.n

kaho to mai.n in se pyaar kar lu.n

baDaa hai dhokha teri nazar me.n

mai.n kis tarhaa etbaar kar lu.n I suspect it belongs to the period when Lata and Rafi didn't sing together. The other female songs are by Lata, one of them a great one:

meraa dil bahaaro.n ka vo phool hai

jise gulsitaa.n ki nazar lag gayi hai. A lovely Suman K. solo comes from 'Mera Qasoor Kya Hai' a Bharat Bhushan and Nanda starrer:

mujhe kabhi kabhi sapna ye aae

ke shyaam meri galiyo.n me.n bansuri bajaae Lata has the other songs, including the title song:

dar dar ki Thokaro.n, itanaa mujhe bataa do, mera qasoor kya hai My favourite from the film is, though, a duet with Lata and, who else, Mahendra Kapoor :) :

koi aanevaala hai, koi aanevaala hai

chaand hi Doliyaa me.n ho ke savaar Finally, let me mention a strangely forgotten film of Chitragupta: 'Aulad', with Jeetendra and Babita. Strangely because the songs are nice and the film was quite a sucess in its time (mid-to-late 60s, I think). From Suman, comes the solo

dagaabaazi piya, tere, dil me.n hai somewhat reminiscent of his own Lata-Usha beauty from 'Burma Road' (I think):

dagaabaaz ho, baanke piya. Lata monopolizes the other female songs of 'Aulaad' with a solo:

kab tak huzoor, rooThe rahoge

le ke ghusse me.n pyaar balam ji ab to ha.nso (approx. words), a duet with Rafi:

aramaa.n tha hame.n jin ka, vo pyar ke din aae and a lovely bucolic chorus song with Rafi:

naazuk naazuk badan mora,

haaye chubh chubh jaae tore nain saawariya. *Babul One of the all-time great songs of Suman K. is this much-neglected gem from 'Sara Jahaan Hamaara':

ye phoolo.n ka gajaraa, ye meraa singaar ho koi leke aaya hai sapane hazaar

o phoolo.n ka gajaraa o o He also composed this delightful Manna Dey-Suman duet for 'Reshmi Rumaal':

aankh me.n shokhi, lab pe jaadu chaal qayaamat, toba toba Turns out I was all wet with the words here. Thanks to Balaji, here are the correct words:

aankh mein shokhi, lab pe tabassum

dil mein shararat, tauba tauba

gaal pe laali, chaal mastaani

us pe nazaaqat, tauba tauba *Sardar Malik Here's an example which would meet all the conditions above, if we agree to consider him great, whcih he certainly was for this film, at least. Yes, the superb soundtrack is enriched by this lovely Suman song, slow- paced, contemplative:

likh de piyaa ka naam, sakhi ri In my excitement, I forgot to mention the name of the film itself! The song is apparently well-known. :)) Yes, the film is 'Saaranga', which would certainly make my shortlist at least as a contender for desert-island-ten! Lata does get the majority of female songs here, with two chorus songs:

dayyaa re dayyaa, ek kanahiyaa and

koi ghar aayega, pyar jataaega

sach_much keh de kaun hai vo tera kaun hai (approx. words) one duet with Mukesh:

laagi tum se lagan saathi chhooTe na and one with Rafi:

piya kaise miloo.n tujh se, mere paao.n paDe zanjeer. Interestingly, the two slow-paced and sad songs are by Suman and Asha. The Asha song goes somewhat like

chali re chali re mai.n to dekh (?) paraai

bheegi bheegi palako.n me.n pyaar chhupaai Lovely song. Needless to say, with the Mukesh and Rafi songs in addition to the above, 'Saaranga' was one hell of a soundtrack. Ashok ----------

RMIM Archive Article "163".

S.P.B. - At the pinnacle of success

Posted by: devm@netcom.com (Dev Mannemela[60])

-------- Somehow the word "gentleman" sounds a bit inadequate for a person of his decorum, refinement and humility. But for want of a better word in the English language, it will have to suffice. Sripathi Panditharadyula Balasubramaniam or S.P.B., for the Indi- an music lovers, is a charming unassuming gentleman of 48, whose achievements have not only been phenomenal but also have tran- scended regional barriers. If he is singing less Hindi songs than he was four years ago, it is by choice - because Balu, as he is known in the film industry, has curtailed his quantum of singing in not only Hindi, but also Telugu, Kannada and Tamil films. Telugu is his mother tongue. "I have been selfless to my profession", he says, "My normal schedule was: dubbing from 7-9am, shooting till 1 pm, dubbing again till 3 in the afternoon, shooting again till 6pm and sing- ing from 6-11pm. Except for the two months every year when my wife and I used to take a total break and head for the United States where my chil- dren are based. I hardly had time for her and for relaxation. After Maine Pyar Kiya (89-90), I was dividing a month equally between Bombay (doing eight or more songs in a day), Bangalore (for Kannada films) and Madras (for the other three southern languages). The strain began to show. My throat developed a 'po- lyp' singer's nodule) which had to be surgically excised." SPB, therefore, feels that it is time for him to be "selfish", look after his voice and interests, and may be fulfill his dream of mastering classical music, he told India West in a recent in- terview. Since he hasn't learned classical music, what are his credentials as a musician (he is a music director too, and specially loves doing background scores, like he did for the Hindi films Hum Panch and Mache Mayuri, at the `recommendation of the composers Laxmikant-Pyarelal) and a singer? "A good ear for music and a penchant for listening", smiles the singer amiably, "I learned notation on my own and can, to an ex- tent, play the harmonium and the flute" (that puts him in the Kishore Kumar and K.L.Saigal league of self-trained singing geniuses). "In my home-town Nellore, in Andhra Pradesh, my father earned his living reciting HArikatha (stories about God and reli- gion) at social and religious gatherings. He knew a little clas-sical music and I guess I must have inherited his flair." The father was keen on an academic career for young Sripathi, and the boy himself set out to do so, even joining an engineering college in Madras, but once SPB's interest in singing was con- firmed his father advised him to make a choice on his own. Destiny made him bid good-bye to the engineering course when (at a college function) his voice caught the attention of music director Kodandpani. "He asked me if I would like to sing for films. I agreed. And that's how I entered films - by accident." His mentor even took him to other composers and made them listen to his singing. "If it hadn't been for him, there would no Bala. Simple" he says matter-of-factly. Today, the singer has a modern recording studio in Madras named after his mentor. "It was the least I could do in his memory", says Balasubramaniam. Once he had made his choice, Balu pursued success single- mindedly. Every struggle saw him become more determined, and every pitfall increased his determination. His single-mindedness was strengthened by his early fondness for yoga. Though his first song recording in December 1966 was for a Telugu film called "Sri Sri Sri Maryada Rammana", he had to struggle for two years more before making it in Tamil films, as initially the famous composer M.S.Viswanathan found his diction faulty. Then came his Malayalam break under the famous composer Devarajan. Says SPB:" I was introduced to that great man by Sekhar, father of A.R.Rahman." Meanwhile, he also got a break in Kannada films. His Hindi break, of course came when filmmaker L.V.Prasad decided to make "Ek Duje Ke Liye", the telugu remake of Marocharitra, a love story between a south Indian boy and a north India girl. "As Kamal Hassan was playing a south Indian boy, I accepted the chal- lenge since I knew HIndi reasonably well - it was my second language in school all through - and I had grown up listening to K.L.Saigal, among others. I was a HIndi film music buff but wor- ried about my accent. I was introduced to

60Source: "India West"

Laxmikant-Pyarelal who had a couple of sittings with me and they made me sing Hindi songs. They liked me and I sang all the five songs for Kamal in the film." He has sung some 26,000 songs to date and has recorded songs in Tulu, Oriya and Bengali languages also. His list of awards and distinctions is extensive, but SPB had to struggle for eight years in Hindi films too. "Anyways, sensations fizzle out fast," he pointed out with another of his disarming smiles. After Ek Duje Ke Liye, L-P continued to give him many songs and followed by R.D.Burman and Bappi Lahiri, who also gave him a change in Hindi films. "Ek Duje Ke Liye." itself wrote commercial and musical history in 1981. "But though I did sing for heroes like Jeetendra, Anil Kapoor, Govinda, Mithun and even Dharmendra and Rajesh Khanna, I feel I was identified only with southern heroes like Kamal (whose career soon nose-dived in Hindi films) and Rajnikant whose forte was action, not songs." It was only in the late 1980s when the Rajshris introduced him to a small-fry composer with big ideas - Ramlaxman, an ardent bhakt of SPB that SPB finally got a full-fledged chance to identify his voice with a hep, young now-generation Bombay hero like Salman Khan in "Maine Pyar Kiya". "This would seem like the most prob- able answer to the million-dollar question as to why "Maine Pyar Kiya" did for me what "Ek Duje Ke Liye" could not." The thunder- ing success of the film and its music and the fast shift from disco to melody at that time did the rest. "I think the time should come for everything to happen," he sums up. In the post-Maine Pyar Kiya phase, SPB sang most of his present tally of around 400 HIndi film songs, most of them under Anand- Milind and Ramlaxman. Among his hit songs were those songs in Vansh, Prem Qaidi, Chandramukhi, Love, Mera Pati Sirf Mera Hai (Anand-Milind), Pathar Ke Phool, I love you, 100 Days, Hum Apke Hain Koun (RamLaxman), Saajan and Majhdaar (Nadeem-Shravan), Gardish (R.D.Burman), Andaz Apna Apna (Tushar Batia), and Roja, HUmse Hain Muqabla (A.R.Rahman). Strangely, during this phase, the music directors who had earlier stood by him, L-P, RDB and Bappi Lahiri took him sparingly. "It is again because of time," sums up the singer. "LP have paid me the unforgettable compliment of calling me the most talented and versatile singer around and have given me many of my finest songs. RDB was a great composer and he has been the most versa- tile music director. He was also the first Bombay composer to use my voice after L-P. For Bappi Lahiri, I do sing occasionally." SPB's list also includes Rajesh Roshan, NiKhil-Vinay, Jatin-Lalit and Anu Malik, who at time called his singing gimmicky. "No gim- mickry can cover up an incorrect accent," discloses SPB in answer to the charge often leveled against him. "Besides, I cannot do that in every song, like say a sad song, and in case I cannot in- dulge in it without the sanction of the composer and the direc- tor." Anu Malik's songs for him include "The Gentleman" hit "Roop Suhana Lagta Hai" and others in "Haathkadi" and "Shabnam". About his accent, Balu admits that he has not reached perfection despite the great improvement he has made over the years. "But singing is basically an art of expressing and conveying a partic- ular thought. The knowledge of the language or at least the mean- ing of the words one is singing is very important, for without that the song will have an incorrect feel, and the singer cannot put in much feeling," he observes. "When I sang in Bengali, Tulu and Oriya, I made it a point that they should explain the full meaning of the lyrics to me. That way, accent becomes secon- dary." The fact that the talent to sing is paramount and the accent is secondary was proved when SPB got an opportunity to sing under Naushad in "Tere Payal Mere Geet". "To sing for a purist like him was distant dream for me," recalls Balu, adding, "But it became a reality when Uttam Singh, the arranger who works for RamLaxman, Ilaiyaraaja and Naushad introduced me to him. I had my doubts about my being able to satisfy his exacting needs. But I thought I should at least sing in his presence because if he rejects me that would also be a privilege." But after listening to him, Naushad went ahead and recorded songs. He also complimented Balu lavishly and affectionately "on my singing and faultless dic- tion." It was the greatest compliment he received in his entire career, the singer said. Balasubramaniam's special asset has always been his lightning grasp of a composition given to him. This, along with technologi- cal advances like dubbing, is responsible for his phenomenal out- put. "When I come to Bombay, my secretary arranges my callsheets (dates in Bombay lingo) so that I dub as many tracks as possible. For example, in a duet, the music track and the other singer's track are kept ready." SPB favors these technical advances for this and two other reasons. "If you make a mistake, that portion can be punched in and you don't have to repeat the entire song. And secondly, the final take can be perfect. Earlier, minor mis- takes had to be retained because

of the difficulties in doing the entire song again." However, the disadvantage has been that with very few exceptions, Balu has had very few exceptions, Balu has had very little oppor- tunity to sing "live" with this very good friend Lata Mangeshkar. "But all our songs in "Ek Duje Ke Liye were recorded live," he says. This also vindicates his stand on modern gadgetry. For between thm, the peerless Lata and the superb SPB have complemented each other so beautifully in their many duets that no one would have believed that they had dubbed them separately. Balsubramaniam toured with Lata Mangeshkar during her tour of the U.S. recently. Both Balu and Lata attended the AAPIO annual pro- gram in July which President Clinton inaugurated in Chicago. Apart from singing and music direction, Balu is also an actor. When he was 44, "by a freak chance, a film called "Keladi Kanmani" in which I had my first major role became a huge hit and I was flooded with offers," he grins. "Acting gives me a break from singing all the time. Besides, anyway we act in front of the mikes." Recently, SPB was great as Prabhu Deva's cop-brother in Kaadhalan (dubbed in Hindi as "Humse Hain Muqabla"). Balu admires A.R.Rahman, but his all-time idol is M.S.Viswnathan, and R.D.Burman on the Hindi scene. Among the old-timers from Bombay, he rates S.D.Burman, Madan Mohan, Roshan, Khaiyyam and Jaidev very highly. While he is a great fan of our singing greats, among his contemporaries, he has raves about Suresh Wadkar. He loves jazz, but not disco, and his hobby is photography - time permit- ting of course. Subramaniam's wife Savithri is, he says: "A good listener." His son is studying in New York, while his daughter has completed her studies in radiation therapy, also in the U.S. And so the singer strides on, charming millions of fans with his soothing, unique and melodious voice, and taking time out to act and compose music as well. He decisively rates "Aate Jaate" as "Maine Payar Kiya"'s best song, even though he got a National Award for "Dil Diwana," and regrets that he did not get any national award for his songs in "Hum Aapke Hain Koun"! But he is also happy for Kumar Sanu, who swept all the awards for "1942: A LOve Story." SPB is too much of a nice person to bear petty grudges.

RMIM Archive Article "187".

SPB and National Award

Posted by: devm@netcom.com (Dev Mannemela[61])

---- In a career spanning over three decades, this is the fifth time that S. P. Balasubrahmanyam has bagged the National Award for the best playback singer. His haul started with the semi-classical movie, ``Sankarabharanam" (Telugu) (1979), followed by ``Ek Duje Ke Liye" (Hindi) (1981), ``Sagara Sangamam" (Telugu) (1983), ``Rudraveena" (Telugu) (1988) and now for the Kannada movie ``Saagara Ganayogi Panchakshara Gavai" (1995), based on the life of the legendary Carnatic and Hindusthani music exponent. The film, produced and directed by Chandodi Bangaresh, has musical score by Hamsalekha, who incidentally won the best music director award this year for the same movie. For Balasubrahmanyam the award for the classical rendering of the Hindustani song, ``Umandu Ghumandu Ghana Gar Je Badara" is a pleasant surprise as he is not proficient in that genre of music. ``I felt thrilled when I came to know about the award. Winning an award always gives a wonderful feeling to an artiste. I am in this field for the past 30 years and one more award rejuvenates me to put more efforts into my singing." Of the two songs he rendered in the movie, Balasubrahmanyam found the award winning piece a very difficult proposition. ``Its base was Hindusthani classical which I do not know. When the proposal came, I said I will not be able to sing the song. But music director Hamsalekha insisted that I should. They took the track, completed the movie and in the process waited for me for nearly six months to render the song. I relented only after practising the song, daily for an hour. Whenever I found time. Normally, I finish rendering a song in about half an hour. But this particular song took three and a half hours to record. I had to undergo a lot of strain. But it was a rewarding experience. I thank Hamsalekha and the director of the movie, Bangaresh, for so patiently waiting for me," says Balasubrahmanyam. The song was written and popularised by Ganayogi Panchakshara Gavai, wo was born blind on February 2, 1892 at Kadashettihalli in the Dharwad district of Karnataka. Gadigeyya was his original name and the title Panchakshara Gavai was conferred on him by his guru and mentor, Kumaraswamiji, of Hangal in 1908 after one of his scintillating recitals. Later, he started a music school and taught music to thousands of enthusiasts of which many were blind. He provided free boarding and lodging facilities for them. Many of his disciples, including his successor, Puttaraj Gavai, won accolades. Pachakshara Gavai, who died on June 11, 1944 left a rich legacy behind him Veereshwara Punyashramam, on the outskirts of Gadag, where hundreds are trained in Hindusthani and Carnatic music even today. ``Yes, the school is still serving many music enthusiasts. I feel particularly happy that I could do justice to the great master's work," says Balasubrahmanyam. Balasubrahmanyam's tryst with Kannada cinema came much earlier in his career. In fact, his second song for films was a duet for a Kannada movie. ``Nakare Ade Swarga" under the baton of music director M. Ranga Rao. Since then from Raj Kumar to his son Shiv Raj Kumar, for two generation of heroes, he has sung thousands of lyrics in that language. Does he find any difference between rendering a song for a Kannada movie and one in other languages? ``The fundamentals are the same, only the rendering is slightly different. But, in general, the melody content in the Kannada songs is still intact. That is a great thing. Even in the fastpaced songs, one finds a certain rhythm and melody in that language. As for music director Hamsalekha, he has a unique style. He did not attain it overnight. I know him for a long time. He used to play mandolin for stage plays. He came up gradually and today he has evolved his own style. Like Shankar-Jaikishan's, one can easily identify his compositions by listening to the tune. No doubt he is the numero uno music director in Kannada. I am particularly happy that he too, has won the best music director award for this film," says the veteran singer. The singer-music director duo have rendered service off the screen too. In September last, Balasubrahmanyam and Hamsalekha conducted a musical evening in aid of `Parivarthana', a trust for promoting widow re-marriage at Bangalore and raised funds. Balasubrahmanyam has won the hearts of

61The Hindu

Kannada cinegoers not only as a singer but also as an actor. Starting his acting career in Kannada films with the super hit ``Muddina Maava'' (remake of ``Mama Gaaru'' which itself was a remake of ``Nan Pudicha Mappillai''), where he played the title role, he had acted in ``Mithileya Seetheyaru'' (which won the regional best film award), ``Bolonda Chaduranga'' and ``Kalyanothsava''. He has also signed for the lead role in Dwarakesh's ``Hryudaya Kallaru''. ``Acting is just to satisfy my inner urge as an artiste. Singing is my passion,'' he says. It is a rare achievement to be on top of South Indian film scene for 30 long years and also to prove his prowess in Hindi cinema too.His latest accomplishment in Hindi was his mellifluous renderings for the all-time hit, ``Hum Aap Ke Hain Kaun''. A contended man, down to earth and simple, Balasubrahmanyam says he still has one disappointment.'' ``I have won national awards for my classical and semi-classical renderings and I am happy for that. But I still have an unfulfilled wish. Though I have won the awards for songs in Telugu, Hindi and Kannada movies, the award for Tamil in which language I have sung innumerable songs, still eludes me. With the impetus given by this award, I will work even more hard to achieve this end'', says the singer who turns 50 this month. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "257".

No Parallel for SPB

Author: B Utthara Kumari[62]

His is the voice you could go on listen- ing to forever. Rich and pure, it's tinged with the kind of magic that is guaranteed to get to the heart strings. Last week, he completed 30 musical years in the film industry. Meet Sripathi Panditharadhyula Balasubramanyam. Or simply SPB to his fans and admirers. A genius. His deep voice lends itself beautifully to any kind of song. And he has become the voice of all top heroes and comedians in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil. With absolutely no formal training in music, he has risen to become the uncrowned king of music. This king of the song is not just a voice: He has a talented finger in every cinema pie. It's true that 24 hours in a day are not enough for this music machine. This man who has sung thousands of songs in more than a dozen languages, is a master of many trades - a wonderful mimic, a brilliant singer, an accomplished actor, a committed producer and a talented music director. Today, he has even embraced the small screen. His Paduta Teeyaga programme on ETV where he is the anchor man, is always top in the ratings. Though he concedes that there are better voices and singers in the film industry, he attributes his immense popularity to ``that extra touch'' which he imparts to a song. His talent for mimicry makes him the voice of all. But even SPB had to struggle to be accepted by people. In fact, when he started off, he was politely asked to undergo formal training in music. Telugu music director S Kodandapani who recog- nised SPB's talent, gave him his break in the Telugu film Sri Sri Sri Maryada Ramanna Katha. But all was not smooth-sailing for him. In the days when he replaced Ghantasala as the voice for A Nageswara Rao and N T Rama Rao, he was rejected. He had to study their dialogue delivery and adapt his voice to match theirs. Then in the early '70s, he was shunned by the Telugu film indus- try, as another singer whose voice is similar to that of late Ghantasala's, emerged on the scene. But SPB whose talent is undisputed, came back with a bang. And the rest is musical his- tory. SPB is so grateful to his mentor late S Kodandapani that he named his production banner after him and produced a couple of good films. This five-time national award winner - he won awards for Shan- karabharanam, Ek Duje Ke Liye, Sagara Sangamam, Rudraveena and Panchakshari Gavai - almost did not sing for Shankarabharanam and the Kannada film Panchakshari Gavai. He reportedly did not want to sing for Shankarabharanam as he did not want to `ruin' this film based on classical music, with his untrained voice. But the music director, who felt in his bones that SPB could deliver the goods, persuaded him to sing for this film. And after continuously playing the cassette for a couple of days, SPB learnt the songs and sang them so beautifully that it is dif- ficult to believe that he was lacking in confidence. According to Hamsalekha, SPB was reluctant to sing for Pan- chakshari Gavai as he (SPB) felt there were better singers than him who could do justice to the classical songs. But Hamsalekha persuaded him and the entire unit worked hard to get the best out of SPB. And the result is there for all to see: He won the national award. An ardent fan of Mohammed Rafi, SPB says he fashions his singing in the Rafi style. S Janaki is his other source of inspiration. In fact, it was Janaki who spotted his talent first at a singing contest and encouraged him to sing in films. SPB who made his debut in Kannada in Nakkare Swarga more than two decades ago, is even today the voice of all Kannada heroes. In Tamil too, he reigns supreme. In Hindi, he ghost-voices for Sal- man Khan mostly. He feels that present day music gives more importance to rhythm than to melody and lyrics. He hopes this trend will change. As for vulgar songs, SPB has been refusing to sing them. ``Today, I am in a position to say `no'. But budding singers may be forced to sing such numbers. We can't blame them really

62 Source: Indian Express

for they are here to make money." SPB has brought out the sparkle in the lyricism of several poets and has lent that little extra something to the melodies of innu- merable composers. He wants to quit when the going is good. But his fans may not allow him to. This humble man has come a long way since his tentative beginnings in 1966. And he has done it alone. SPB imitators are many. They can keep trying. But the SPB magic remains unparalleled. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "206".

Yesudas

Posted by: Jeyashree Chidambaram[63] (jac@cs.umanitoba.ca)

-----_ In the world of music, K.J. Yesudas is truly exceptional - his success in the dual spheres of popular music as well as classical music is unparalleled. Yesudas was initiated into Karnatik music at a very young age by his father Augustine Joseph. He made his stage debut at age 12, and graduated from the Trivandrum Music Academy in 1958. Yesudas's success in the world of popular music has been phenomenal. His first playback song was in the movie Kalpadukal in 1961. Besides Malayalam, he sang in all other South Indian languages. In 1976, he started singing for Hindi movies, and films in other North Indian languages. Today he is the only Indian musician to have recorded songs in all Indian languages except Kashmiri and Assamiya. He received the Padmashri from the President of India in 1977. He received the first National Award in 1977 for singing in the film Achanum Bappayum, his second National Award for the film Gayathri, the third National Award in 1978 for film Chitchor, the fourth National Award for the Telugu film Megasandesham, his fifth National Award for the flm Unnikale Oru Katha Parayaam, and his sixth in 1992 for the film Bharatham.(Hey Ramesh, isn't that impressive that he scored the National Awards for songs in three languages?) The film Chitchor also won him a Filmfare Special Award. Alaap got him the Sur Singar Samsad Award and Dada the Filmfare award in 1980. In 1991, he received an honorary doctorate degree from the Annamalai University in recognition for his contributions to music and art. He received the Lata Mangeshkar Award in 1991. Besides these national awards, Yesudas is the recipient of 16 Kerala State Awards, eight State Awards from TamilNadu, 5 state Awards from Karnataka, four State Awards from Andra Pradesh and one State Award from Bengal.(Any idea which is the movie?)In 1992 he received the distinguished honor of "Star of Cochin" from the citizens of Cochin. The government of Kerala has named Yesudas "Asthana Gayakan". In 1971, Yesudas with his musical troop traveled from one end of Kerala to the other end to raise funds for the Prime Miniater's National DefenseFund during the India-Pakistan war. Yesudas is the chairman of the Kerala Academy. He launched a recording studio Tharangini in Trivandrum in 1980, where he records and reproduces the music cassettes. He also started his Tharanga- Nisan music school in Trivandrum. Yesudas became a Senate member in the International Parliament for Safety and Peace, an organization incorporated in the U.S. Today, Yesudas has sung more than 20,000 songs in different languages. he has conducted more stageconcerts than any other performer in India. In spite of all his success in popular music, he enjoys classical Karnatik music more than any other. He is one of the few singers in the world who sings in the classical idiom as well as he does in the popular. Yesudas lives in Madras with his wife Prabha, sons Vinod, Vishal and Vijay. ----------

63Source: India Currents

RMIM Archive Article "207".

Kavita Krishnamurthi

Posted by: Arvind Agarwalla[64]

Author: Anil Gorver

"Aaj Main Upar"

- Finally, there is no doubt left about that. She's been there all these years, but like many good things, she was taken for granted. Her songs were a hit even about a decade ago - yes, that long-but poeple forgot to check out who this fresh new singer was. There was a rash of singers, both male and female, and among the female, Anuradha Paudwal and Alka Yagnik were the two who caught the car. Maybe because they were being touted as the Lata Mangeshkar clones. The Aasha Bhosle and Geeta Dutt clone got the miss. But even in the late Eighties, Kavita Krishnamurthy had struck a chord with the discerning listener who did not miss her characteristic low profile. A profile that covered a tremendous range, a range that rainbowed across the new horizon. The sister - in-law of Manna Dey showed her superior breeding even then. Consider her first hit, Tum se mil kar (Pyar Jhukta Nahin) played on Padmini Kolhapure. Or Har Karam Apna karange, /Ai watan tere liye (Karma) picturise on the serene Nutan. And then consider her Bijli girane main hoon aayee (Mr India) liped by an absulutely loony, Hawa-hawaii Sridevi; She did her karam all right; and she girao-ed the bijli, you bet. Cut to bakery fresh memory. If Maniksha Koirala floated like a butterly in Pyar hua chupke se (1942 A Love story), a considerable amount of float was imparted to her by Kavita krishnamurthy who stood her own aginst Lata Mangeshkar herself in the film. And if the same Manisha sung like a bee in Agnisaksi, the buzz in Iqraar karna mushkil hai for a large part belonged to Kavita. And in case you forgot, Kuchi Ckuchi rakamma for Manisha in Bombay was, agains, who else. Lately, A.R. Rahman's Hundustani has this pop number, Telephone dhun mein hansne wali where again Kavita outclasses Hariharan completely with her Swaranlatha-ish bass. As she did to Udit in Tu cheez badi hai mast mast (Mohra). Switch to Rajesh Roshan's Papa kahte hain in which she enchants with Pehle pyaar ka pehla gham. Then again, to the top of the charts with Jatin - Lalit in Aaj main oopar (Khamoshi). And watch her verve and vigour in the forth coming Nazrein lad ganyyaan (Bal Bhrhmachari) where she leaves Kumar Sanu cold in his version of the racy song. And so it continues. In this age of Nadeem-Shravan Anand-Milind, Anu Malik and of course A.R. Rahman, the very dependable duo of Laxmikant Pyarelal has been elbowed out. But not quite, yet. They strike again with a vibrant force in Bhairavi (Plus Music; Rs 28), daring to go a little more classical than usual. In the musical base, it is reminiscent of their earlier hit, Sargam, though this is more classical and draws it nearer to LP's Sursangam in which the duo had used Rajan and Sajan Mishra so brilliantly. The film's theme reminds one of Sangeet in which Madhuri Dixit played a blind singer opposite Jackie Shroff; here, Ashwini Bhave is the sightless singer (costarring Sridhar), who puts the twinkle in her throat. There are seven terrific numbers in this film and the very first, Balam Kesariya, just sends you. A duet by Kavita and Udit Narayan, you can go on rewinding this one number till the tape wears out. But unlike Khamoshi which has only Baahon ke darmiyaan (Hariharan and Alka Yagnik) with similar repeat value, this film has a lot more going for it. This song of spring is followed by a viraah-geet in Ab ke sawan mein barkha nahin which very nearly - though the distance is quite a bit - catches up with that unforgettable Asha Bhosle song from Bandini : Ab ke baras bhej bhaiyya ko babul. And there is romance in the air again with kuchh is tarah (Udit-Kavita) whose lyric incidentally also won Amit Khanna the National Award this year. Amit is an old hand at lyrics, anyway. Being a master of many arts, he shifted from being a journalist who went to interview Dev Anand to becoming his secretary; from thereon, he moved into lyric writing (chalte chalte, not less) and even into production (man Pasand, for one). Then this cinema encyclopaedia on two legs broke into

64India News Network

TV when people were still looking at the idiot box with internal antenana as if it was a face from Mars. By now, you know enough about Plus Channel and Plus Music to waste time on tuitions here. But we digress. Back to Kavita on the flip side of the cassette. Chal ripawan proves the lady's range again: her feather-soft, and mind you, feather-soft despite her deep throat, caress in the opening lines releases all the doves in your heart at once. It is in this lyric also that Amit Khanna shines; maybe they gave him the National Award for the wrong 'un. And there are two bhajans to complete the tresure trove, one of which is a duet by Kaavita and Roop Kumar Rathod (Om Namah Shivay). Watch again Kavita's honeyed modulation, the tracking of the sargam, making Om Namah Shivay a showcase for the best voice, male or female, on the circuit today. We said that a decade ago in The Telegraph Magazine. And we say it again, here. ----------

RMIM Archive Article "215".

Kumar Sanu

Posted by: aagarwal@leland.Stanford.EDU (amit agarwa[65])

Some facts on Kumar Sanu from an article in INDIA CURRENTS advertising Kumar Sanu & Alka Yagnik's concert in the bay area.

1. He has sung in over 500 films.

2. He has a Guinness book entry for recording an amazing 28 songs in a day.

3. He received his early training under his father Pashupatinath Bhattacharya.

4. He got his first break when gazal maestro invited him to sing for the film AANDHIYAAN. [Does anybody have more information on this?]

5. However, he was really discovered when he sang for Amitabh in Jaadugar.

6. His first hit was Aashiqui and he got a filmfare award for it.

7. In a interview he said: "I have specially enjoyed working with R. D. Burmanji. He made me sing the best that I could. When I was working with him in 1942: ALS, he would say, `Sanu, this is your song,you decide how to sing it.' It inspired me and I think I sang like never before."

8. He has won filmfare award five times [Aashiqui, Saajan, Deewaana, Baazigar & 1942; ALS] and this is a record. No actor, music director or singer has received it five times in a row. "I have now declared that I will not accept any more awards." he says. [Does that mean he has put himself in the same league as Lata Mangeshkar?]

65Source: An ad in India Currents

RMIM Archive Article "270".

Hema Sardesai

(http://www.expressindia.com/screen)

Author: Unknown [66]

------- Hema Sardesai is in a celebratory mood. She has reason to be. Her fourth song for a Hindi film, Awara Bhawre is a huge hit and the lady is getting recognition from all quarters. In an hour- long interview, a happy Hema hummed to her hearts content and spoke about the past, present and a possibly bright future. Excerpts: Did you ever think that Awara bhawre would make it to the top of the countdown charts? Well, I knew it would make it to the top 10, but I never thought it would be No. 1. But I guess Rahmanji must have had a premoni- tion. After the recording, while everyone around was telling me, "Great, you were just great!", Rahmanji who's a man of few words, just nodded and said, "Good, God is great". That was enough for me because even I have this habit of saying "God is great". But when he added, "I want to see what this song does for this girl," I knew that he was really satisfied with my performance. That was a real compliment! But honestly, I didn't really think the song would take me places. I'd had three other numbers ? Halle halle (Aar Ya Paar), Tere mere sapne (Tere Mere Sapne) and Mere saiyan (Shastra) ? in the charts earlier and they hadn't taken me anywhere. Hey, even the Grand Prix I won in Germany when I was adjudged the best singer amongst top crooners from 20 coun- tries, hadn't done anything for me. So I didn't expect much from Aawara bhawre. And was Rahman right? Well, I haven't been flooded with offers but yes, now that I have a No. 1 song to my credit which is the ultimate for any singer here, my special gift is finally being recognised. A top media entertainment company wants to handle my work. Three-fourths of the pop music industry want to record an album with me. Now, all I have to do is choose. But what about the film industry? They're more wary. But I'm in no hurry. I've just recorded a song with Jatin-Lalit. I did this naughty, sexy number with Anu Malik which has just been added to Miss 420. In Khhote Sikke I've done this red-hot passionate song for Rajesh Roshan. There's another great number with Anand Raaj Anand and, of course, First day in America for Subhash Ghai's Pardes. It's an English song scored by Nadeem-Sharavan. I've even recorded a song with Rahmanji for Sap- nay which has just been added to the film. Really? When you skipped the premiere of Sapnay despite being in Mumbai, there was talk of trouble brewing between you and Rahman. What nonsense! I didn't go for the premiere because I was to record a song with Rahmanji for Govind Nihalani's Takshakt that same evening. The recording was at 10 pm. And though I knew Rah- manji would stop at the premiere first, I didn't want to do the same in case I got held up in the traffic on my way to the studio and reached after him. I'd hate to keep my music director wait- ing. So I decided I'd skip the function instead and managed to reach the studio at 10 pm sharp. Rahmanji walked in half an hour later and told me that everyone at the theatre had been asking him why he chose Hema Sardesai. I'm thrilled he did. Okay, why did Rahman chose you for Aawara bhawre? I guess I have Ranjit Barot to thank for that. I'd done some jin- gles and Oh Darling! Yeh Hai India with Ranjit and he sent one of my tapes to Rahmanji. When he and Rajiv (Menon), with whom I'd also done some jingles, were discussing Sapnay and Rahmanji insisted he wanted a `different' voice for Sapnay, Rajiv sug- gested my name. Rahmanji remembered he had one of my tapes and dug it out. The next thing I knew, I got a call from Rahmanji in Chennai. Was I free to record a song? Wow! I thought it was a joke but I still dashed there. When I picked up the mike, Rah- manji told me he didn't want me to sound filmi. "I want you

66Source: Screen magazine

to sound like Mariah Carey.... Whitney Houston. Mad and bubbly," he instructed. I gave it my best shot and after one stanza Rajiv exclaimed, "Hey she's really Mariah now!" to which Rahmanji replied, "No, she's Hemariah. Even when she's doing Mariah, she manages to be herself, gives the song an original touch." That's a compliment I took to heart. Everyone is amazed at how closely your voice resembles Kajol's. I'm thrilled when I hear that because Kajol's very talented and she's done a great job on the song. I guess I must have uncons- ciously had her in mind when recording the song. Though I've never met Kajol, I've seen Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge. You know, when I tell friends I've sung Aawara bhawre they exclaim, "Really, no wonder she behaved like you." I'm an excellent imita- tor. I'm also very fun-loving, mischievous and seldom sad. I guess we have very similar personalities. However, I'd like to clarify that I never said that I don't sing for stars, they enact my mood. I was misquoted, I'm not so pompous. So will you be happy to be known as Kajol's voice? After Sapnay I haven't received any offers to sing for Kajol. Even the other number I sang in the film was not for Kajol. I may suit Kajol, but I can never be just her `voice'. It'll be hard to slot me. People tried that once when after Halle halle they put me in the Alisha-Poornima bracket. I messed up their calculations with Aawara bhawre. Recently, when I sang for Dilip Sen-Sameer Sen, they told me I had the playful feel of Geeta Dutt. I was thrilled but I can't be another Geeta. I'm much too versatile for that. In fact I'd say I am the most versatile Indian singer, ever. A Jack of all trades and I'd like to believe, a master of all too. How can you say that? Recently, when I was discussing scores and lyrics with Muzaffar Ali for his forthcoming film, I sang a thumri for him followed by a Mariah Carey number and wound up with Awara bhawre. Even he was impressed with my versatility. I have a degree in classical music and yet I sang an English song in Germany and won top honours. I've performed a lavni at the Marathi Natya Parishad and in the same costume sang my Grand Prix winning number and made headlines the next day. I can do a passionate Halle halle and also a Tere mere sapne with desi adaptations of western pieces. How many singers can boast of that? In fact, when I went to study rhythm and blues music from Michael O' Hara, the great black singer said, "Hema, you don't need to study further. You're an original. Be yourself. You're wonderful!" You know, the only reason I may not be able to make it in America is because I can't be slotted. I can't be white and at the same time, though my skin is dusky, I don't sound like any black singer. So where does that leave me in the USA? If you know that, why did you suddenly take off on a six months tour to the USA a couple of years ago? In Germany, I was on the front cover of every magazine. In Yugos- lavia, I was a crowd-puller at the UNICEF concert. In the West Indies, after I wrote the English lyrics and lip synched to the Maine Pyar Kiya songs, people were thronging the airport to catch a glipse of me. But in India I was a nobody even though the industry knew that I'd won the Grand Prix. PTI had sent the reports. Yet, except for the one song in Goonj, I didn't get any offers. I turned down the few music directors who approached me, including one of the top guys, because I didn't like their atti- tudes. I knew God had given me a special gift and I wasn't going to cheapen or misuse it. Smarting from the pain of rejection I decided to go to America. I always had a passion for Western music and I decided now was the time to see what I could do there. I had a six months' visa and after travelling for three months I decided to make New York my base and strike out. And I was a success. I have letters from all the top entertainment houses in New York telling me I was extraordinary. So why did you came back? I couldn't stand the pain of longing. I'm an emotional Cancerian. I missed my family... my husband, and came back. My excuse was that my visa had run out but basically I just wanted to be back in Mumbai with all its stink and pollution. It's still the best place in the world for me even though earlier I used to feel so lonely here. Everyone was so busy, they had no time for me, I felt unloved and unwanted. And being new to the work culture, I didn't approach anyone. Thank God, Rajeshji, Viju, Sooraj Barja- tya and Rajkumar Barjatya took me on and made me realise there were beautiful people here too. On a day when you're not recording, what do you do? Play with my dog Hunter. He's like my child. If my husband is in town - he's usually in Goa where he's distributing auto spares - I give him my undivided attention.

Or else I pray to God, ask- ing him if he loves me as much as I love him. You're religious? Well, I think India is the most beautiful, spiritual country in the world and it's time we put an end to all strife. I wear a cross in one ear and an Om in the other and a symbol of Allah round my neck. People may think I'm mad but I think I'm very sane. You know, when the Pope came to Goa, I was the only Hindu among the 40 singers who sang at the papal mass. Father Peter who had composed 3-4 songs, wanted me to be the main soprano singer. Art and creativity have no religious barriers. Have you been getting any acting offers? Well, I've done a video with Ranjit Barot, Chute na tera saath where I'm singing in the rain without a trace of make-up on. It was very beautiful and sensuous, almost mystical, and I was noticed. I haven't been offered any films yet, but I'd love to act in lead roles. I was pretty good on screen but I don't think I'd want to get into Hindi films. I went through so much trauma when I was trying to make a break as a singer. I wonder what I'd have to go through if I wanted to get into acting.

RMIM Archive Article "336".

Hema Sardesai - Sapnay come true

Author: Piali Banerjee[67]

---- Seven years of struggle and some bitterness later, Hema Sardesai, the 'Awara Bhanwara' girl, has finally found recognition "I'LL be wearing black, as usual. Along with my earrings and chain representing the Cross, Om and Allah. You won't have any problem recognising me," says India's newfound nightingale, Hema Sardesai . Success seems to become her. Amazing what one song can do - especially to the once shy, understated Hema, who came to Mumbai, seven years ago, to try her vocal chords in the electronically haloed portals of the recording studios. Hema was shrugged off as a gross misfit. But she hung on - cold rejection notwithstanding: "I didn't give up hope, because of my belief in myself and my love for singing." This affair with singing started, "ever since my singing teacher in school told my parents that I had talent, which should be honed." Hema's academically oriented family took the teacher's advice with a pinch of salt, expecting music to be nothing more than a passing fancy. Were they mistaken! Little Hema took to squatting on the verandah of their idyllic Panjim (Goa) home and filling the quiet afternoons with her melodious notes. "Initially, complaints poured in from neighbours who didn't want their siestas disturbed," she recalls, with a grin. "But gradually, they became fond of my singing and the complaints stopped." Since then, Hema has been a regular first-prize winner at most of the contests in Goa. Which also meant that she got to brush shoulders with artistes like Remo Fernandes, who egged her on to her first big break. At his suggestion, Hema represented India at the International Pop Song Contest in Germany, which had over 20 countries participating in it. Hema walked away with both the Grand Prix as well as the Audience Darling prize. Armed with the Grand Prix and a degree in Indian classical music from Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Hema finally managed to persuade her parents to let her come to Mumbai to fulfil her dreams... Easier dreamt than done! The darling of the international audiences and Goa's most popular songstress was completely unaware of the tricks of the trade. "I didn't even know that I was supposed to make the rounds of music directors' offices and go around begging for work," she says. "I took it for granted that, just like opportunities had come to me before, people would come to me on their own and offer me work!" And was she in for a rude shock when they didn't. Hema had to content herself with singing jingles to earn a living. She sang jingles for Liril soap, Melody chocolates, Mango Frooti, etc. Obviously, it wasn't enough. "An artiste needs recognition," she admits. "Especially someone like me - an out-and-out audience artiste. When I sing on stage, it's like I'm making love to my audience. I have a passionate bond with them." And so it was that she bonded some more when she represented India at the UNICEF concert in Yugoslavia and at Madison Avenue in New York. Unfortunately, none of that worked in her own country. In fact, her first brush with the film industry was nightmarish: "Every music director who agreed to give me work tried to take advantage of me as a woman. They told me it wasn't enough to just have talent, it was necessary for me to have affairs with them! I was so disillusioned and dejected that I shied away from the film scene for a long time after that." She concentrated on Indian classical music and Marathi 'sugam' and 'natya sangeet'. She still faced rejection from music directors and companies. "Music India, for instance, offered me a poor budget for an album, saying that I wasn't glamorous enough to merit a better one," she reveals. "But I refused to change. I had my own image. I was original and believed in myself." Sticking to her guns proved costly, of course. With no work came an overriding sense of depression, and Hema actually contemplated suicide! Not that an outsider would have guessed it,

---

67Source: Femina

because she made sure her happy-go-lucky exterior was intact. "My studio image was always jolly," she says. "So many times, I've overheard my colleagues wondering why I was always so happy, when I had no work! Little did they know that I faced my bouts of black depression alone." Meanwhile, Hema wrote and sang the English versions of the songs of 'Maine Pyaar Kiya'. She received a lot of offers to sing on stage in the United States, where she began spending a major part of her time. Finally, sure that she wouldn't be able to etch out a career in Bollywood, she was about to go back for yet another long trip to the US, when good fortune finally struck. She got a call from Aadesh Srivastava, who offered her a song in 'Shastra'. "He frankly told me that he would record my song, and only if he found it good would he actually use it in the film. I appreciated his honesty and thought it was a fair enough chance." Aadesh did use her song. And this number resulted in her getting a number of other film offers. She recorded for films like 'Dastak', 'Aar Ya Paar', 'Tere Mere Sapne' and, of course, 'Sapnay', whose playful number, 'Awara Bhanwara', catapulted her to stardom overnight. Suddenly, after seven years of anonymity, Hema found almost all her songs featuring among the top ten in all the major music countdown shows in the country. How does it feel to be on a sudden high? "Great. I only wish it had happened before so that I wouldn't be as bitter about as many things as I am today," she sighs. Today, she has recorded songs for a number of films - Mukul Anand's 'Dus', Subhash Ghai's 'Pardesi', Govind Nihalani's 'Takshak' and United Seven's 'Miss 420'. Most of the numbers are light-hearted and frothy. "The problem with the film industry is that you tend to get slotted easily," she agrees. "A. R. Rahman dared to try me in a playful number like 'Awara Bhanwara'. I can sing in all moods - I have sung 'thumris' before. I do wish someone would take a chance and give me a different number so I can prove my versatility." Hema has also recently recorded two solo albums - one is in English, 'Call Me Eternity', and the other in Hindi, 'Duniya Ki Jaan Hoon'. "I will be shooting for the videos of these numbers soon - after I manage to lose a little more weight, that is," she smiles. Hema is a happy woman today - what with her marriage to her longtime friend Xave, who, though he stays in Goa, provides her with all the moral support she needs. ("So what if we stay in different cities?" she argues. "The distance only makes our marriage stronger.") And with recognition dogging her heels. "My music is god's gift to me and I want to make full use of it," she says. "My main mission in life is to spread the message of one world, one love and one religion. That is why I wear symbols of all religions. If my listeners love my songs, perhaps some day, they will take my message to heart, too, and there will be some peace in the world..."

RMIM Archive Article "271".

Abhijeet - Against All Odds

(http://www.indiaxs.com)

Author: Unknown[68]

------- Success in Bollywood is not easy to come by. Especially for play- back singers, success is very elusive. Despite being gifted with a melodious voice, an aspiring playback singer in Bollywood has to struggle and strive consistently to secure a break as a singer. It was no different for Abhijeet Bhattacharya, better known as Abhijeet, a popular playback singer today. He had to scale the ladder of success the hard way. And now that he has managed a foothold in the film industry, there's no looking back. For a playback singer who attained stardom with the 'Chandni raat hai tu mere saath hai..' song for the Salman Khan-starrer Baaghi, Abhijeet has entrenched himself firmly in the music world, with several hits to his credit in the past alone, including Teri ankhen jhuki jhuki (Fareb), Shaher Ki ladki...(Rakshak), Jhanjhriya...(Krishna), Yeh toh teri payal hai... (Masoom), Tan tanatan... (Judwaa), Dil de de... (Auzaar) and Allah miyaan... (Judaai). Be it a Sunil Shetty, a Milind Gunaji, an Indra Kumar, an Anil Kapoor, an Akshay Kumar, a Saif Ali Khan, or a Salman Khan, Abhijeet has sung for them all. And be it a Laxmikant Pyarelal or an A.R. Rahman, Abhijeet has lent his voice to prac- tically every music director in the business. It was Abhijeet's passion and zest for music that led to his entry into playback singing. Hailing from a middle-class Bengali family from Kanpur (UP), Abhijeet, the youngest of four brothers, came down to Mumbai in 1981 to study Chartered Accountancy, but owing to his fascination for melody, he abandoned accountancy halfway and decided to struggle for a place in Bollywood as a playback singer. Currently living in a luxurious apartment in the upmarket Lokhndwala neighborhood in Mumbai, Abhijeet, in pursuit of his dream, passed his years of trial and toil in cramped, tiny rooms and stingy guesthouses; at times, due to economical constraints, Abhijeet returned to Kanpur a dejected man. Each time being drawn to the magnetism of Mumbai. Abhijeet received a new lease of life when famed music director Ravindra Jain, also hailing from Abhijeet's hometown Kanpur, offered to allow him to live with him. It was during his stay in Ravindra Jain's company that Abhijeet's proximity to Bollywood grew in a phased and gradual manner. He began to visit R.D. Burman's residence quite often, and frequently got singing assignments for stage shows of Mohan Govandi, one of his acquain- tances. Later, following Ravindra Jain's marriage, he shifted to a Government Colony at Wadala in Mumbai. Around the same time, with assistance from some of his musician colleagues, Abhijeet recorded a demonstration -tape featuring three songs in his voice with a view to promote himself among music directors. Soon enough, his effort bore fruit. Music director Rajesh Roshan heard his demo-tape and dubbed four lines of a film song in his voice. The film was Ek Daku Shaher Mein. Abhijeet's next oppor- tunity at came when Jagjit Singh gave him the opportunity to render his voice for a song along with five other singers for Vikram's film, Nirvan. Abhijeet got R.D. Burman to hear the song, who, in turn, offered him a break as a full-fledged singer in Dev Anand's Anand Aur Anand. The song was Waadon ki shaam aayi, yaaron ke naam aayi..., which Abhijeet recorded along with Kishore Kumar and Lata Mangeshkar. However, now, remembering his rendition for the song, Abhijeet cannot contain his embarrass- ment. "I feel so ashamed whenever I hear my voice in that song," Abhijeet confesses, "I am glad that there was a gap following that song. If I were to record a few more songs in a similar manner, I would've been ousted from the industry long since."

68Source: Indiaxs

The film failed at the box-office and that meant back-to-square-one. Fortunately for him,this time Abhijeet didn't have to wait long. He received his most significant break when music directors Anand-Milind recorded Chandni raat hai tu mere saath hai.. song for Baaghi. The film was a runaway musical success. Consequently, major assignments followed, and the popularity of songs from the Sanjay Dutt-starrer Sadak and Akshay Kumar-starrer Khiladi took him several steps up the ladder of success. And it was with the phenomenal popularity of Ole Ole from the Saif Ali Khan-starrer Yeh Dillagi that finally accorded him the celebrity status. Ole Ole was Abhijeet's crowning glory. Commenting on the art of playback singing, Abhijeet says, "Play- back singing is a God-given gift. It is an art which cannot be learnt in any training school. Either you have it, or you don't. It's a creative skill which doesn't comprise of any technique or method. Yes, a basic training is vital, but again, how one goes about benefiting or improvising on it is largely dependent on how competent a person is." For Abhijeet, the opportunity of honing his own skills comes while he is at work. "Singing assignments are the best form of practicing and honing one's skill," the singer states, "Every other day, I get to record a new song under a different music director, and thus, I have to rehearse and rehearse a given song a number of times before it's finally recorded. This, in effect, proves to be a good exercise for the vocal chords." Every professional has an ideal, who serves as a source of inspiration and encouragement. For Abhijeet, "It's Kishore Kumar. He has been my ideal all along. No one has so far surpassed him in the profession; he was an encyclopedia in himself." Abhijeet attributes his involvement as a playback singer to Kishore Kumar. "It is because of Kishore Kumar's singing that I find myself in this profession. Earlier, I had been highly influenced by musical instruments; I was very fond of playing drums. I wanted to become a musician, and it was after hearing Kishore Kumar singing that helped inculcate in me the sense of music." Abhijeet was in the news some time back for his alleged state- ments criticising Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, the famous music direc- tor from Pakistan. A query in this connection elicits an immedi- ate reaction from Abhijeet. "He has abused our country," he states excitedly. "He said that there's a shortage of talent in India and that he has come here to settle a score. Now that's an insult to our nation and our musicians. I objected to this state- ment made by him because I cannot tolerate an insult to India and my fellow musicians. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan comes to India and insults us and our country in public, and we bear it without reacting. First he maligns our country, and later says that he is sorry, that he didn't mean to imply this; it's simply ridicu- lous." Voicing his unhappiness over the issue, Abhijeet expresses his fondness for the Shiv Sena supremo. "I admire Balasaheb Thackray. He's like a God to me. I would like to request him to drive Nus- rat Fateh Ali Khan out of the country for having insulted our motherland in public. I cannot bear to hear anybody insulting my country like this." Abhijeet claims to have sung around 1000 songs so far, of which about 100have been released, with nearly 60 hit numbers. "I only hope and pray that I can continue to entertain and be appreciated by music lovers," he says candidly. "However, I would henceforth like to concentrate on good numbers. And I hope that I am remem- bered for my renditions for a long, long time to come."

RMIM Archive Article "179".

Smooth switchover from one style to another - Hariharan

Author: K. SANTHOSH[69]

Interview by K. Santhosh

Thiruvananthapuram holds a special place in singer Hariharan's heart. His father, H. A. S. Mani, lived in this city before migrating to Bombay for a living. Young Hariharan used to spend his summer holidays in Thiruvananthapuram with his uncle. ``My father was among the first batch of graduates from the Swati Tirunal College of Music, where greats like G. N. Balasubramaniam and Harikesanellur Muthaiah Bhagavathar taught. As a child, father used to sing `kirtans' with T. K. Murthy now a well-known mridangam player accompanying him on a tin-drum. The duo had even displayed their talents before the then Maharaja of Travancore, Chithira Tirunal Bala Rama Varma," Hariharan says. The golden-voiced singer, who performed in Thiruvananthapuram recently, spoke about his chequered career and the contemporary film music scene. Excerpts: Question: How did you manage a smooth switchover from Carnatic to Hindustani music? Answer: I picked up Carnatic music from my mother, Alamelu. My parents were musically open-minded. I was encouraged to hear a lot of Hindustani music. Later, I trained under Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan during which I had to unlearn whatever I had imbibed earlier and adapt myself to the ``gamak-oriented" style. When I embraced ghazals, I took extra care about my pronunciation. I put my heart and soul into learning Urdu. Q: Can you speak about your early interest in ghazals? A: It all began after I heard Mehdi Hassan in 1970. What a great singer! He could breathe passion even into the dullest lyric. His numbers, ``Patha Patha Poota Poota" and ``Ab Ke Hum Bichade," are still on every lip. I also relished listening to Jagjit Singh (``Saamne Baite Use Log Bura Kahte Hain") and Ghulam Ali (``Para Para," ``Tur Gayi Maayi").``Ghazal" means ``talking to the beloved." Originally, the songs were accompanied by the ``pakhawaj." They had the ``thumri" style of ``gayaki."I like them because they offer immense scope for innovation. Classical techniques such as ``alaap" and ``sargam" can be employed while singing them. And they please both the connoisseur and the common man. Some of the finest film melodies by composers like Madan Mohan and Jaidev are in the ghazal format. Q: Was it not Jaidev who promoted you in the industry? A: Yes. I first met him at the All-India Sur Singar Competition in 1977, of which he was a judge. Jagjit was another. I won a prize at the contest and Jaidevji offered me the chance to sing a number, ``Ajeeb Saane He Mujh Par Qurar," for the movie ``Gaman," directed by Muzaffar Ali. Under his baton, I also crooned for the movies, ``Raam Nagari" and ``Khadi Ki Do Haat." He was my friend, philosopher and guide. His death a few years ago came as a great shock. I miss him very much. Q: Who are your favourite singers? A: I like Mohammed Rafi for his versatility, Kishore Kumar for his liveliness, S. P. Balasubramaniam for his vocal power, K. J. Jesudas for his classical depth.... Q: Your mentor Jaidev had offered some of his Hindustani-based songs, ``Chaand Akela" and ``Koi Gata," to Jesudas. Do you think you, with your Hindustani background, could have sung them better had you been asked to? A: ``Chand Akela..." (sings the first stanza of the song). The numbers would certainly have sounded different then. But I do not know whether they could have been better than the ones Jesudas rendered. There was a remarkable freshness about Jesudas's voice when he entered Hindi films in the Seventies. Few can excel him. Q: Do you feel contemporary ghazals tend to be repetitive? A: Yes. But don't they still have takers? Why do people prefer ghazals? You hear pop music at a party or when you are in an elated mood at home. But you can not hear it always. It's just like you can not always have exotic dishes. You have to return to ``idli" or ``roti." I am not saying that the Western mode should be avoided. It is part and parcel of our light music. The moment you mix a guitar chord into a folk or semi-classical song, the western element comes in. I am all for fusion music. Again, this is the age of video. With an eye on private television channels, every singer brings out visual presentations of his songs. It is a glamorous

69Source: The Hindu

affair. But there is no other alternative to survive in the market. Q: You had been in the industry for almost 15 years. But you have sung only about 100 movie songs... A: I have worked under stalwarts like Jaidev, Naudhad Ali, Salil Chowdhury, Lakshmikant-Pyarelal, R. D. Burman and Usha Khanna. I have recorded duets with singers like Kishore Kumar, Jesudas, Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhonsle. Yet the industry never sat up and took notice of my work. It was only recently that I gained recognition through my work for the films, ``Dard Ke Rishe,'' ``Ram Nagri,'' ``Zamana,'' ``Sindoor,'' ``Boxer,'' ``Lamhe,'' ``Sahibaan,'' ``Roja,'' ``Darr,'' ``Rangeela,'' ``Jallad,'' ``Priyanka,'' ``Shikar,'' ``Kabhi Na Kabhi'' and ``Mritu Dand.'' Quite a few offers have come from Tamil films (``Love Birds,'' ``Asai,'' ``Mr. Romeo,'' ``Kalluri Vasal,'' ``Coimbatore Mappilai'' and ``Indian'') and Malayalam (``Azhakiya Ravanan''). Before the film assigments poured in, I recorded ghazal albums such as ``Reflections,'' ``Ghazal Ka Mausam,'' ``Paigam,'' ``Gulfam,'' ``Sukoon,'' ``Aab-Shaar-E-Ghazal'' (with Asha Bhonsle), ``Horizon,'' ``In Concert,'' ``Haazir'' (with tabla maestro Zakir Hussain) and a pop one with Kavita Krishnamurthy.My association with A. R. Rehman has been hugely successful. Songs like ``Tamizha Tamizha'' and ``Uyire Uyire'' were instant hits. Rahman is one of the music directors who has cut across all linguistic barriers. His music is enjoyed all over the country. How did he pull it off? He came at a time when the country's youth, who had started gyrating to songs on foreign music channels, were looking for something different from Indian composers. Our concept of light music has changed over the years. The new listeners demand stereophonic music with oodles of metallic sounds. Rahman has fulfilled this. Q: Wasn't Ilaiyaraja doing the same thing in some of his works? A: Ilaiyaraja's style is different. He has been heavily influenced by the classical compositions of Mozart and Bach. Rehman's mode, on the other hand, is more jazzy. Q: But hasn't Rehman been influenced by Ilaiyaraja, just as the latter had been by Salil Chowdhury? A: Rehman's approach to sound is vastly different from Ilaiyaraja's. Notice their string arrangements. You can spot the difference. Both are masters in their own rights. Q: Will the ``Rehman wave'' last long? A: I think it will, at least for another five years. Rahman knows his onions. Q: What are your future plans? A: Several new ghazal albums are on the cards. A pop album, ``Colonial Cousins,'' in which I partner Leslie Lewis, will be released soon. I have sung in English for this. I have plans to produce collections of ``geets'' and ``bhajans.'' Even though an extrovert, I am a deeply spiritual person. K. SANTHOSH --- --- --- --- --- --- --- ---

RMIM Archive Article "174".

Composers' Wives and Singing

Posted by: vishk@cup.hp.com (Vish Krishnan)

Author: Vish Krishnan

[Context: follow-up to "Lata and her female co-singers article"]

Particularly interesting were the stats for Lata's songs with composers' wives, the ones present as well as the ones not shown. Among the rare occurrences that showed up on your list were Ira Nagrath (Roshan's wife), and Lalita Dewoolkar (nee Phadke, Sudhir Vinayak Phadke's wife whose most popular song was probably the Rafi duet "More Raaja Ho, Le Chal Nadiyaa Ke Paar"). The other rare ones that should show somewhere are Bela Mukherji (Hemanta Mukherji's wife) and Pallavi (Mariwalla) Panchal (Jaikishan's wife). About the latter, I have only heard from some "insiders" that she sang a low profile part in some duet with Lata while keeping a weather eye cocked on the goings on around her husband. I beg the reader's forgiveness for even bringing this up. Also, I don't recall a Lata-Bela Mukherji song, but am quite sure there is one. And here are some curiosities. What is the Lata-Suman song? I have 2 "bad" tapes of rare songs, and they both (mistakenly) show a couple of duets to be sung by the two. One is a Gaud Saarang tribute from the movie CHANDRAMU- KHI. The song "Chaandni Jhilmil Kare, Taaron Bhari Ye Raat Hai" is in reality by Lata and Sudha Malhotra. Likewise, there is an obscure song from Hemanta Mukherji's CHAAND ("Kabhi Aaj Kabhi Kal Kabhi...") that is also labelled as sung by Lata and Suman. Sounds more like Lata and Usha. So my question remains. I realize that Lata and Sabita Banerji (later Chowdhury) never sang together. Interestingly enough, every Lata song that had the grand Calcutta choir in the background managed to do without Sabita's voice. Either there was no such solo voice in the back- ground (e.g. PARAKH, MAAYA), or Lata herself generated that ef- fect (e.g. HONEYMOON, HALF TICKET etc). The MAAYA song "Ai Dil Kahaan Teri Manzil" is interesting. For Dwijen Mukherji, Sabita C. provided the high contralto support (just an approximation). When Lata sang the same, Salil Da decided not to include Sabita's voice, but maintained the choir in the background. By contrast, Asha would not have that problem. She has sung more than one song with Sabita Chowdhury. The one I remember is a rare Assamese piece from MADHUMATI ("Kaancha Ri...."). But the same does not hold for Jagjit Kaur. Again, Asha has a couple of songs with her. And I do believe that Lata's wedding solo from KABHI KABHI ("Surkh Jode Ki Ye Jagmagaahat...") is couched in a folksy Punjabi shell provided by 2 voices. I will guess one of them to be Jagjit Kaur, and the other? Pamela Chopra, maybe (??) (isn't she Yash Chopra's wife?). Perhaps these 2 names should be on the list. One could make the argument that certain duets have that hetero- geneous quality about them whereby the various voices featured sing their own distinct pieces that are are also disjoint, and for that reason, such songs are not really "duets". If that measure were to be used, perhaps the above KABHI KABHI song would not qualify. But if it were to qualify, then all of a sudden, we have to make room for at least 2 more songs that can both in- cidentally be described as borderline Carnatic presentations. First, there is PYAAR KI PYAAS, where Vasant Desai wraps up 10 different languages in one song ("Kiskaa Desh"). Each piece is distinct. The Marathi, Marwari, Gujarati, Punjabi and Kashmiri verses are sung by Lata, the Hindi introduction is by Manna Dey and Raanoo Mukherji, the sweet Bengali "Sonar Bangla" component is done by Geeta Dutt,the Tamil incantation is by ML Vasanthakumari, and I don't recall the rest. Next, there is NEW DELHI, where some unidentified, uncredited South Indian Carnatic singer provides uncompromising vocal support for Vyjayanthimala's Thillana prior to the song "Murli Bairan Bhayee". For that matter, Madhubala's BAHUT DIN HUYE has quite a few classical songs by Lata (mostly composed by Veer Vidwaan Eemani Sankara Sastry) that have some other solo voices as yet uncredited. Enough hairsplitting. Finally, I can hardly let go without saying something about Meena Kapoor (she is the daughter of Bikram Kapoor, a character actor from the '40s,

whose friendship with Ninoo Majumdar (assistant to Anil Biswas) is what led to the first meeting between this future husband-wife team, and the rest is remembered through some wonderful Anil Biswas compositions!). The 3 Lata-Meena Kapoor songs I remember are all forgotten clas- sics. Foremost is the SAUTELA BHAI mujraa "Laagi Naahi Chhoote Raama, Chaahe Jiyaa Jaaye" - the song represents the last time the 2 sang together. Meena Kapoor's performance here is exem- plary. It also makes me sad that she did not get to sing more. The other 2 Lata-Meena songs are both from ANGULIMAAL, a collec- tion of truly great compositions by Anil Da. Rabindra Sangeet oriented people will recognize the playful Bahaar song:

Aayee Aayee Basanti Belaa, Lagaa Re Lagaa Phoolon Kaa Ban Ban Melaa

Magan Man Jhoom Rahaa Jhoom Rahaa, Jhoom Rahaa, Jhoom Rahaa

Aayee Aayee.... This one also features Manna Dey's voice. Finally, the same movie has a Piloo favourite of mine that goes "Jaa Ri Naa Bataaoon Main To Naam Chitchor Kaa". The glory of the '50s and '60s remains, but only in memory. cheers vish

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fanatic, period. He is a retired Theoretical Physicist. He has been watching Hindi movies since 1952, has been collecting Hindi songs, movies and magazines since 1969, and has been writing about these things since 1996. He has had a website since 1999,

http://hindi-movies-songs.com/joomla/

OTHER BOOKS BY THE PUBLISHER

For more information please visit

https://hindi-movies-songs.com/joomla/index.php/published-books

1 Edwina: An Unsung Bollywood Dancer of the Golden Era, by Prof Surjit Singh (2015)

2 The RMIM Minibus (1992-): A Compendium of Selected Writings About Indian Films, Their Songs and Other Musical Topics From a Pioneering Internet Discussion Group, by Prof Surjit Singh (2017)

3 Music and Arts in Hyderabad Deccan: A Contribution to the History and Culture of Bygone Days, by Kamalakar Pasupuleti (2017)

4 Indurani: An Unsung but Unforgettable Heroine of the Early Talkies by Prof Surjit Singh (2017)

5 Sahraa Sahraa (Urdu poetry, Hindi and Urdu editions), by Raj Kumar Qais (2017)

6 Telugu Filmography Volume 1 (1932-1980) by Dr Venkata S Vutukuri (2018)

7 Telugu Filmography Volume 2 (1981-2000) by Dr Venkata S Vutukuri (2018)

8 The Lost Treasure: Early Hindustani Talkies: Based on Contemporary Material, by Kamalakar Pasupuleti and Prof Surjit Singh (2018)

9 Forgotten Artists of Early Cinema and The Same Name Confusion, by Arunkumar Deshmukh and Prof Surjit Singh (2018)

10 Drops on a Leaf by Jyoti Bhamra (2018)

11 Hindi Films: Pictures of the Cast (1933-1937), by Sheo Khetan and Prof Surjit Singh (2019)

12 Illustrated History of Punjabi Cinema (1935-1985), by Bhim Raj Garg (2019)

13 Unsung Junior Artists of Hindi Cinema Who Debuted Before 1961, by Upendra Samaranayake and Prof Surjit Singh (2019)

14 Beete Hue Din (Forgotten Memories of Hindi Cinema) by Shishir Krishna Sharma (2020 English)

15 Beete Hue Din (Forgotten Memories of Hindi Cinema) by Shishir Krishna Sharma (2021 Hindi)

16 Hindi Films: Pictures of the Cast II (1938-1940), by Sheo Khetan and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)

17 Unsung Junior Artists of Hindi Cinema Who Debuted After 1959, by Upendra Samaranayake and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)

18 Master Ebrahim: The Forgotten Ace Clarinetist, by Prof Surjit Singh (2021)

19 Censor Certificate Information of Hindi Talkies (1931-2010), by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2021 English)

20 Censor Certificate Information of Hindi Talkies (1931-2010), by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2022 Hindi)

21 Background Dancers in Hindi Films (1952-68), by Edwina Violette, Narsingh Agnish and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)

22 Films Showing in Madras Theatres (1941-1947), by MV Surender, N Ramaswamy and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)

23 Rainbow of Emotions, by Lalit Berry (2021)

24 The Caliginous Light, by Rashmin Bhardwaj (2021)

25 Witnessing Wonders, by Ali Peter John (2021)

26 Laxmikant-Pyarelal Music Forever, An LP Era ::1963-1998, by Ajay Poundarik (2021)

27 MY DEV Memories of an Immortal Man by, Ali Peter John (2021)

28 Silent Cinema In India 1913 – 1934 When Silence Spoke In Celluloid by Sanjeev Tanwar (2021)

29 MUNNA The boy who grew into a legend by Ali Peter John (2021)

30 Hindi Films: Pictures of the Cast III (1941-1942), by Sheo Khetan and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)

31 Early Hindi Film Advertisements (1935-39), by N Ramaswamy and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)

32 WITH YOU, MAA, WITHOUT YOU, OH MAA! by Ali Peter John (2021)

33 The Bitter-Sweet Cocktail, Movies, Music, Wine, Women, The Life and Times of C. Ramchandra by Dilip Shripad Phansalkar (2022)

34 Hindi Talkie Filmography (1951-1960) by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2022 English)

35 Tujhe Mere Geet Bulate Hain – Pt Bharat Vyas Filmography by Sanjeev Tanwar (2022)

36 The Golden Era of Hindi Film Music by Ashok Jagtap (2022)

37 ALI(VE) in Bits And Pieces by Ali Peter John (2022)

38 The Story of The Rainbow Bunch Dr Amit Sur (2022)

39 India: A Reckoning With History by Dr Sanjay Sood (2022)

40 Hindi Films: Pictures of the Cast IV (1943-1946), by Sheo Khetan and Prof Surjit Singh (2022)

41 Hindi Talkie Filmography (1951-1960) by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2022 Hindi)

42 Hindi Film Song Picturizations (1951-1960) by Prof Surjit Singh and Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' (2022)

43 History of Indian Cinema by N Ramaswamy (2022)

44 From Jhunjhunu to New York Story of My Life, Part 1 by Sheo Khetan (2022)

45 Hindi Film Song Picturizations (1951-1960) by Prof Surjit Singh and Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' (2022

Hindi)

46 Fact and Fiction I. Fiction by Dr Khawar Sohail Siddiqui (2023)

47 Fact and Fiction II. Fact by Dr Khawar Sohail Siddiqui (2023)

48 Hindi Talkie Filmography (1961-1970) by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

49 Lyricists of Hindi Cinema by Jawed Hamid and Gajendra Khanna (2023)

50 Group Dancers of Indian Cinema (Golden Age and Beyond) by Upendra Samaranayake and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

51 Hindi Talkie Filmography (1961-1970) by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2023 Hindi)

52 Hindi Talkie Filmography (1961-1970) by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

53 Forgotten Artists of Early Cinema and The Same Name Confusion, Book 2 by Arunkumar Deshmukh (2023)

54 Films and Shows in Bombay – 1931 Ajit Sidhu and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

55 Hindi Films The Stars of Silent Films Hindi Films Stars Series: Part 1 by Sheo Khetan (2023)

56 filmindia Covers Collection by Sanjeev Tanwar (2023)

57 Pictorial Journey Of Hindi Cinema 1951 by Sanjeev Tanwar (2023)

58 Early Hindi Film Advertisements II (1940-43), by N Ramaswamy and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

59 Beete Hue Din (Part-2) (Forgotten Memories of Hindi Cinema) by Shishir Krishna Sharma (2023 Hindi)

60 Tales of Stealth for the Curious One by Khawar Sohail Siddiqui (2023)

61 Hindi Films: The Stars of the 1932-37 Films: Hindi Film Stars Series: Part 2 by Sheo Khetan (2023)

62 Hindi Films: The Stars of the 1932-37 Films: Hindi Film Stars Series: Part 3 by Sheo Khetan (2023)

63 Hindi Film Song Picturizations (1961-1970) by Prof Surjit Singh and Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' (2023 Hindi)

64 Hindi Film Song Picturizations (1961-1970) by Prof Surjit Singh and Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' (2023)

65 The One And Only Common Man by Dhiru Mistry (2023)

66 Poems Written in a Flutter by Hashmat Rahimtoola (2023)

67 GROWING OUR FAMILY, NY AND PA; Sheo Khetan, Life Story, Part 2 by Sheo Khetan (2023)

68 GROWING OUR FAMILY, NJ; Sheo Khetan, Life Story, Part 3 by Sheo Khetan (2023)

69 Hindi Film Geet Kosh Saga of a Compiler's Odyssey, Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

70 Hindi Film Geet Kosh Saga of a Compiler's Odyssey, Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh

(2023) HINDI

71 Hindi Films: Pictures of the Cast V (1947-1949), by Sheo Khetan and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

72 Radio Transcripts Volume – 1 (Vividh Bharati Special Programmes & Non-Vividh Bharati), By Sujoy Chatterjee (2023)

73 Early Hindi Film Advertisements III (1944-48), by N Ramaswamy and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

74 ANIMAL FAIRY TALES FOR ALL AGES by Khawar Sohail Siddiqui and Aimeen Siddiqui (2023)

75 Hindi Talkies (1951-1960) 78RPM Records Information by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2023) HINDI

76 Hindi Talkies (1951-1960) 78RPM Records Information by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

77 Pictorial Journey Of Hindi Cinema 1952 by Sanjeev Tanwar (2023)

78 Hindi Talkies (1961-1970) 78RPM Records Information by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

79 Hindi Talkies (1961-1970) 78RPM Records Information by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2023) HINDI

80 Early Hindi Film Photo Gallery I (A-F) by N Ramaswamy and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

81 Poems Written On A Whim by Prabodh Shukla (2023)

82 Films Shown in Bombay – 1941 by N Ramaswamy and Prof Surjit Singh (2023)

83 Film News and Reviews at Madras Theatres (1937-41) by M V Surender and Prof Surjit Singh (2024)